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PROFESSOR OF LATIN

SERMONS

BY THE

REV. FREDERICK BROOKS,

LATE RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, CLEVELAND, OHIO.

BOSTON:
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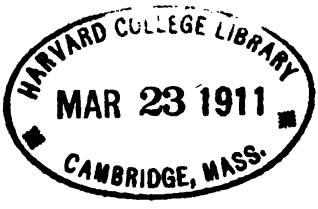

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INTRODUCTION.

THOSE to whom these Sermons came at their author's death have felt a certain responsibility concerning them. It has not seemed right to allow their usefulness to cease. One characteristic belongs to all of them, a simple manifest desire to reach the lives of men and bring them help and comfort. This desire which was so strong in the writer of the Sermons has influenced us to publish them, in the earnest hope that the words which were powerful when they were spoken may have the same power when they are read. There are many persons to whom the Sermons will recall their author, for they are singularly full of him, the natural expression of his character and thought. To such persons they will have a special value. But to others who never knew

the author in his life, we venture to hope that they will be of interest and benefit as thoughtful and suggestive presentations of the Gospel.

Both to his friends and to others who may know him through these Sermons, it is not unfitting to recall the few events of the simple and earnest life of Frederick Brooks. He was born in Rowe Street, in Boston, on Friday the 5th of August, 1842, and was the fourth son of William Gray, and Mary Ann Phillips Brooks. His early life was that of many Boston boys, first at one of the Grammar Schools, and then at the Public Latin School of Boston. In 1859 he entered Harvard College, and graduated with good honors in 1863. During his college course the war broke out, and his whole soul was interested in the struggle. He would gladly, if he could, have been among the soldiers rather than among the students of those days. His college life was quiet and retiring, but he won peculiarly the respect and affection of those who knew him. To the end of his life

he kept a warm interest in his college, and part of his last day was spent at Cambridge. He wrote the Graduation Ode for his class, and often afterwards contributed verses for their social meetings.

When college life was over, he hastened to the field, and in the service of the Sanitary Commission did most devoted and useful service to the soldiers for a year. In 1864 he entered himself as a student of the Episcopal Divinity School in Philadelphia. There he remained two years, spending a long vacation at the close of the first year in teaching a Freedman's school in Farmville, Virginia. He was ordained a Deacon in the Protestant Episcopal Church, at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Philadelphia, by Bishop Stevens, on the 12th of June, 1866. At once the West attracted him, and he became Rector of St. Paul's Church, Des Moines, Iowa. Here he remained two years, and in November, 1867, he accepted a call to the Rectorship of St. Paul's Church, Cleveland,

Ohio; and in that church, giving to its interests his most devoted care, proving himself a rare pastor and preacher, helping and teaching many souls, and building his parish into singular solidity and power, he remained until he died. The summer of 1872 he spent in Europe; and it is good for his friends to remember with what keen pleasure he recalled his journey, and with what eagerness he cultivated the delight in Art which had been awakened in the Old World. In October, 1873, he became Editor of the "Standard of the Cross," and gave that paper at once a marked and noble character. He developed a remarkable editorial skill, and his enthusiasm and energy were as lavish in his paper as in his parish.

There is little more to tell. He had long desired to see in Cleveland a thoroughly good school for boys, and gradually he had matured his plans for the opening of such a school, in the autumn of 1874. The teacher whom he had engaged fell ill, and he hur-

ried from Cleveland to Boston to arrange new plans. In seeking a substitute for his sick friend he went to Lowell, and failing in his mission there, he was returning on a bleak September evening. The train was detained just before reaching Boston, and after waiting awhile he started to walk into town. He was obliged to cross a railroad-bridge which had an imperfect flooring, and in the darkness and storm he missed his footing and fell into the river. Aid came to him too late, and he was swept away and drowned. His friends waited for him, but he never came to them alive. His work on earth was done; as simple, true, and brave a work, a work as full of the strong and happy love of God and love of fellow-man as any servant of the Master ever did. Five days afterwards his body was found not far from where he fell; and after the funeral service had been read in Emmanuel Church in Boston, all of him that could die was laid in the family burial ground at Mount Au-

burn. He died on Tuesday, the 15th of September, and was buried on Thursday, the 24th of September, 1874.

To those who knew him, these facts will tell the story of his life, and to them and others these sermons of his will certainly reveal something of his mind and heart, something of the way in which he used to think of earth and heaven, something of the earnest devotion with which he was "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

The Sermons are printed just as they were preached; and with this brief introduction we offer them to the intelligent and thoughtful Christian reader. P. B.

BOSTON, *August*, 1875.

SERMONS.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND OF THE LAMB.

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory . . . . stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.

"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest." — REV. xv. 2–4.

WE have been reading, in the Second Lesson of this evening's service, the Song which Moses sang when Pharaoh and the pursuing army of Egypt were overwhelmed in the Red Sea, and the Israelites stood delivered, free and victorious, through the power of God. It is one of those glorious lyrics which Moses, the Lawgiver, uttered at

the epochs of his life, and which give us a glimpse of the man of God's law as the man of joy, as both God's *legislator* and God's *poet*, — that same glimpse which you catch in the life of David the poet, meditating on and delighting in the commandments and law of God. But I ask you to think of the Song of Moses this evening, not for this reason, but for the sake of the wonderfully high, useful, and strengthening place that God has given this one song in His teaching of man.

I have read to you as my text a passage at the close of the Bible, which carries us forward into eternity farther than the song of Moses carries us back into the past. The text pictures to us the joy of heaven, and connects the song of heaven's redeemed inhabitants with the song of Moses in these wonderful words: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." What has one to do with the other? Here are the oldest of recorded events and words joined with the farthest and latest possible event and words. Here is the beginning of earth's human history

united with its divine consummation! Here are the words of earth and heaven coupled together, — the song of Moses and the song of the Lord Christ, the song of Israelitish victory and of Christian victory, in one breath of thanksgiving! And as we look more carefully we see it is all very full of parallels. The singers in both cases stand by a sea, — the Red Sea of Egypt and heaven's sea of fire, — and they are each singing in an attitude and strain of deliverance and freedom from enemies and of victory. And the sentiments of the two songs we shall see to be the same, God's great power and display of judgment, and the acknowledgment of all nations.

Now, out of this connection between a song sung long ago on earth over an event of earth and bearing a human name, and the song of the heavenly future over a spiritual redemption and its heavenly results, and bearing the divine name of the Lamb, — out of this union of the two we can take some very strong lessons to-night, I think, — lessons which I shall ask you to divide into two kinds in this way: —

I. What is taught us about our life on earth.

II. What is taught us of our life in heaven.

I. What is taught us of earth's life. When I find an event like the old Israelitish victory and a song like that of Moses carried forward and appearing in the future heavenly history and combined with Christ's victory and song, it lights up human life with a new meaning and radiance to me. It has, in the first place, this value: it connects the end with the beginning. How early that old victory and song of Moses were, one of the very first human victories under God's guidance! How the contest of man and his troubles and struggles have been renewed since in many a form and in every individual life, and in every place and moment of history! How far away seems that first victory from the heavenly end, when there shall be no more struggle and no more pain! How since Moses, multitudes, and generations, and companies of men, have all had their contests again and again! How, with every day, it comes to each one of us!

How premature seems the old song of victory when a new enemy is to come immediately! How ceaseless seems the struggle to us! And so God puts into one phrase for us the earliest and last song of victory, the beginning and the end, the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, the victory of Moses over Pharaoh and one evil, and Christ's victory over *all* evil and all enemies. No matter how early in the struggle you may be, the end is shown and Christ's victory is coupled with it, and you are to think of them together. Do not say, discouragingly, "The contest will be renewed again in another way to-morrow;" but say, "The contest will end surely and finally victoriously in the Lamb's triumph." Do not say, "I have come the first mile of the perilous way, but how many more there are;" but say, "As I have come the first, so I see the last in the inspiration of that phrase, the song of Moses and of the Lamb; as I sing of the first and partial prize, I know I shall sing of the last and complete prize, won through the same power."

But there is a better, deeper thought of

encouragement than this which comes out of that connection, "the Song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." It is that all righteous issues and all struggles of men are parts of Christ's issue and struggle and victory, and so each man's song is sung with and in the new song of the Lamb. We need to think of this. Christ's contest and death and victory were not all a history alongside of ours, to which we can look up from our own and take courage; but they contain ours and all the struggles and victories of the servants of God everywhere. The victory of Moses, the victory of David, the victory of Hezekiah, the fight and victory of any man, — of John, of Peter, of Polycarp, of Luther, of Cranmer, of Washington, of Lincoln, of you or of me, or of your poor neighbor anywhere, — they are all represented as bound up in Christ's great fight and conquest of evil. His is the one victory that includes all others. The song of the Lamb includes the song of Moses, includes your song and mine. See how close and dear this makes Christ's life to you. When He

hungers or thirsts, is denied, rejected, rebuked, repelled, tempted, attacked, betrayed, mocked, smitten, or killed, it is your cause, it is the history that includes all else. Moses' early victory is in it and yours of yesterday and to-day. Oh, as I am led through a life's discipline, am told to do without this or that, am bid to contend with this or that selfishness, am pressed hard by this or that sorrow, am tempted to give up my trust in God's care and to be sour or reckless, how it helps me to go and put all this experience into the Gospel story, to translate it into the struggle of the Lamb of God, to think of it all as a part of His issue. This loss of friends or love, — I see it in His solitariness. This temptation, — I see it in His agony. This weariness of mine, — it is in His unthanked life. This bodily pain and sickness, — I see it in His pain of crucifixion. This mocking and misappreciation, — it is part of the battle which He fought so perfectly with Pharisee and persecutor.

So we can wrap ourselves in the story of Christ, and a sweet nobleness comes out of that companionship and from His represent-

ing us. How different it seems to us when we think of it as part of His battle; how grand, instead of being trivial; how heroic, instead of being harassing; how animating, instead of depressing; how full of dignity, instead of shame; how sure, instead of being uncertain and doubtful. Oh, how Christ claims every true human experience as belonging to His and as part of His when He uses that phrase, "the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb." They are one and the same. The same words commemorate both. The life of man was lived in Christ's life. His trial is the trial of each individual; His victory each individual's; His song is Moses', and yours, and mine. My struggle and victory, then, to-day, is no mere disjointed, separated thing, done alone and without lasting effect, but it is a part of a great victory of the Lamb already won. This little song, which I sing through my tears as I conquer a hard temptation and struggle through a sea of evil, is a part of Christ's song. It does not lose itself in earth's air and die, but it shall live in Christ's song to the end of eternity, when tears are all wiped away.

And so that brings me to a third thing which the phrase teaches us about our life on earth, — it is that God would have it *happy*. Earth's song He continues into heaven, not its tears; Moses sang of victory, not of his troubles. God approves of his earthly joy and makes it eternal. He never meant the earth to be a dreary place, nor yet to be a frivolous place, but to be filled full of the high, deep joy of victory through His power; of gaining of freedom; of death of enemies; of acquisition of strength of character; of passing through waters of sorrow on dry land; of giving what selfishness would keep; of doing what indolence would leave undone; of saying what policy would leave unsaid; of not saying what cruelty would say; of dying rather than living wrongly. How from it all goes up a joy, a happiness, a song which shall be part of the song of eternity. Your happiness in a new, pure life will join the happiness of Moses, and all human thanksgiving; and God will listen and incorporate it with the joy of Christ. Oh, do you not see how God hears and loves to hear man's happiness, his freedom and victory on earth!

He has no pleasure, indeed, in your selfish, dissipated joy, the song of slaves. He shuts His ears to the merriment that comes from your gain of money, from your wine and feasting and devotion to sense. But He is keenly alive to the ever-chastened, rich joy which comes from a victorious nature on earth, wherever uttered. He would have it always thus happy, in company and alone, in the country and city, in the vacation and in the labor. He will have it joy *eternal.* Begun here, it will go on forever, even after the struggle has died away, just as Moses' song is above and forever, although the old history has long ago passed away. It shall sound forever, for it is the joy of one who has won spiritual fruits through faith in God and the power of God. Oh, let life be thus happy, for God wishes it, longs for it, is now listening for its songs, to keep their strains and reproduce them. Are you singing any hymn of victory to-day? Are you joyful over a dead sin, — or are you merely merry in slavery or sad in defeat?

Now, take for a few moments, our second division of thought for this evening. What

we learn of heaven and of its life from our text, which describes "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." First, it gives us this thought of heaven: as a place in which each one of us has a marked individuality and history, even in Christ's presence. We think so much of a multitude there which no man can number, that we forget the other truth, the distinctness of each redeemed one, how each servant is received with his own commendation and is recognized and named with his own individual name. Heaven would be an unbearable place unless we lived ourselves individually, enjoyed and felt ourselves. And this thought is given us in the fact that the song sung by Moses the servant of God, is remembered and repeated there. Human names and experiences and victories, are mentioned there in the very company of the name and experience and victory of the Lamb. They sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Heaven is not an indistinguishable multitude gathered about a throne. It is a place of distinct natures and lives, where the distinctness of life and character is recog-

nized as nowhere else; where lives which here are lost in the throng of the street or society, stand out clear, bright, and marked; where the sons of God are manifested; where human histories sing their victories, and separate experiences joy before God even in their common joy in Christ. How the few famous names that we know of will there be multiplied! Many a servant of God who has sung like Moses his heart-song of faith and triumph, will appear by Moses' side. A city of kings will heaven be; all natures marked and distinct; all with a history and a claim to distinct remark and notice. Oh, my friend, your experience may be known on earth. Newspapers, books, men, states, histories, may know you, but that is nothing. Will you be known in heaven in Christ's presence? Will your victory be sung with Christ's?

But there is another thought in the fact, "They sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb." It gives us the communion of saints in that song. They not only all join in the song of the Lamb, but in the song of Moses, the servant of God. They use words which

commemorate not only Christ's victory, but the victory of Moses too. Think of it: the voices that all go up to Christ, all also using Moses' experience and Moses' song-words! It is that Christian truth: your experience is mine, and mine is yours. Every man's victory I sing, and every man sings mine, as part of that same salvation of the Lamb which has rescued and sanctified you or me or the man who sings. I cannot afford to lose anything that illustrates God's power and Christ's life. I sing Moses', and David's, and Isaiah's, and Paul's song. I am glad of more and more great Christian names and triumphs. We each sing them. They each express our own. Oh, I imagine it. We separate ourselves now, and say we are so different in our churches, and worships, and ways, and beliefs, and times. But a day of heaven will make it all right. Moses' time, and nature, and methods, and kind of work, may have been very different, but we sing his song and his victory. And so of any life of God's power. It may have taken a very different religious mould, or denomination, or worship, from yours, but if it illustrates Christ's

power you will then enjoy its experience and sing its song, and will wonder how you ever stood so far away from it below. Oh, get some of this heavenly power of communion of saints now. Believe really in communion of saints. Do not let anything cut you off from a life that is showing God's victory. Sing its song, put yourself into its experience and place, and you will sing your own song and fill your own place all the better and more fully.

And now, lastly. This text of mine tells me of the thoughts which are the atmosphere of heaven. Often we wonder, "What *is* the new song? What will be my state of mind, — what my sentiments?" The passage tells us: the song of the Lamb is the song of Moses the servant of God. The words of the song of heaven, — they are but the nobler, fuller use of Moses' lyric words. The words which ring over the crystal sea of fire are the words sung by the Red Sea, set to the harps of God. Moses sang, "Who is like Thee? — glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" And the redeemed sing, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord

God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, for Thou only art holy." Moses sings, "The peoples shall hear and be afraid. The rulers of Edom shall be amazed: the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away." And the redeemed raise the same strain of Moses and of the Lamb, "Who shall not fear Thee and glorify Thy name, for all nations shall come and worship before Thee?" Moses sang, "Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee: Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. The Lord brought the waters of the sea again upon them, but the children of Israel went on dry land through the midst of the sea;" and the redeemed take up Moses' strain, and they too sing, "Thy judgments are made manifest." What I want that we should feel is, that heaven's song is a new setting to God's harp of any song we have sung on gaining a spiritual victory over enemies by God's power here and now and in this earthly life. Let a man triumphantly resist a temptation, conquer a passion, win a new grade of character by God's power, and he has the very sentiments exalting and moving his heart and life which

the new song will have in richest and completest harmony. That peace, and trustful, humble joy which you had yesterday when God's power helped you to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan;" that great sense of God's excellent power and holiness; that feeling of safety through Him and His manifest judgments and protection, is just what will fill the song of the Lamb sung by those who have gotten the victory over the beast. It will, indeed, be sung more gloriously, with purer lives, with more clearly open eyes, with more experience behind you, with God nearer you, with God's own accompaniment, the very harps of God, and nothing shall be out of tune. Everything shall combine to lift the great sentiments to their loftiest, sweetest tone. It is a new song, but after all it is the song of Moses and of every servant of God at the border of his Red Seas, first; what you may sing every day if you will. Oh, do not say, my friends, "I do not know what heaven is, — I can tell what earth is, but not heaven." You can know heaven every day. Every holy satisfaction, every sense of God's power and protecting love, every

enemy overthrown, every step taken into a new experience and sight of God's judgments, will give you something that belongs to heaven. You may so multiply heavenly sentiments here and now, that when the harp of God is put into your hands it will be the old words, the old strains coming back to you with many a memory of a victory of earth, but woven into so complete and new a measure, sung in such a company, in such a nearness to Christ, that it will also be the new song of the Lamb. Or you may so be without any heavenly experiences here, that you will know nothing to sing to the harp of God, for none can sing that song save those who are redeemed from this earth. Oh, which future shall you have? Will you not answer it now, and begin the song at once by your Red Sea, wherever it may be, to-day and to-morrow?

THE POWER OF A FACT.

"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." — St. John ix. 25.

Our Second Lesson has given us this morning the story of a cure whose history occupies a whole chapter, — a circumstance which hardly occurs elsewhere in the Gospels of the New Testament. This of itself would argue the importance of this miracle upon the man "born blind." But as we come to look more closely at the chapter itself and its history, its importance, I think, becomes plain to us. I think this man who is released from his native blindness by Christ, is one of the strongest characters which the Gospels paint for us about the person of our Lord. Follow him through the chapter, and through all its various situations and discussions, and you feel that he is the man of the most real manhood among them all, disciples, neighbors,

parents, and Pharisees. I am going to ask you this morning to see wherein his great strength lies, what it is that makes him so real and firm a man. It is, I believe, the consciousness of a fact, a great fact, in his life's history. "One thing I know," he says, "that whereas I was blind, now I see. That is the great, wonderful event which has happened to me, which fills all my consciousness, before which everything else is little, which influences and colors everything, and the remembrance of which rules me." In every knot of men which clusters around him, with their little wondering questions of curiosity or malice, he simply tells his one great fact, "I went and washed and received sight." "I washed and do see." "I was blind and I now see. Make what you can and will out of that. I go no further than to state it. It is so wonderful." Neighbors cannot lead him into gossip about anything else. Parents cannot interfere with or share his great possession. Pharisees cannot obscure it by their jealousy and sophistry. Still this sententious, immovable, positive man, rejoicing in his new sight, repeats, "I only know this, I was blind

and now I see. He has opened my eyes." We can hardly think of him as the former beggar. He is too imperious for a beggar now. Now, if you select from the chapter the various positions in which he thus appears, you will discern the great strengthening value of a fact in a man's history, felt through and through his life's consciousness. That is my subject.

See, then, how this man first appears after his cure by Christ. The neighbors and his former acquaintance gather around him, and begin to question as to his identity. "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said, "Yes, this is he." Others, "He is like him." But he said, "I am he." There is the first effect of the coming of this great fact into his life, to make him honest in regard to self. It is as if he had said, "Here is a great event that has happened to me, unprecedented and marvellous. I am its subject. Such an attention has been bestowed upon me and my wants, and my condition, as I never heard of, as shows that I am the object of care to a Divine mind and power. A new value has been given to my nature. I have a new,

stronger sense of self. Yes, I am he. I was blind, and now I see. I will not leave you to dispute about my identity." That is the first great value of the consciousness of a fact in one's life history, the new honest view of self and its value. Is it not so always, brethren, even in temporal life? A man or a nation lives along on a dead level; the man in some retirement of wealth, or some depression of poverty; the nation in the quiet of youth, or servitude, or laziness, — and he or it knows or thinks nothing of the real self and its power, till some fact strikes, wakens, stirs the latent man or nation, as a rock thrown into a still lake makes it quiver to the very innermost centre, upturns its lowest waters, astonishes it with a new sense of its own depth. "This life," we say, "that has such events in its history, we must examine it carefully and honestly; it is important; it is not to be disregarded, or falsely regarded." And the more wonderful the fact, the stronger the honest sense and view of one's self. Now, brethren, it is just so if you can once fill your dead consciousness with the conviction that a wonderful miracle has been done to

you and for you, that a Christ has saved you, redeemed you, purified and exalted your nature. You have reached a new value of that nature. You look at it with an intenser honesty, a clearer insight. Its destiny, its power, its real character, and its real good start upon you. No more does it seem fitted for mere society and its silly artificialities; no more for mere covetousness and its cruel starvation of self; no more for dissipation and its empty husks. But you cry, "*I* am he whom a man called Jesus saved. I am the wonderful subject of this great fact. God help me, for I never really saw myself before."

Oh, my friends, the system which teaches us to know ourselves the best is that which brings the greatest fact into our history, — the Gospel and its fact. And yet multitudes of us go through life, while all about us, above us, and beneath us point to us, "Is not this one for whom Christ died? Is not this one of those wonderful saved human natures?" and we practically deny ourselves, because our consciousness is so dead. We will not recognize the great event of our life. It is

like a southern district that I saw months after our war ended, whose people had never heard the great fact of actual freedom, and did not know their own real condition, but labored on in bondage. So is a worldly man. The fact of freedom by Christ he has not received and therefore he knows nothing of his self and its destiny and rights.

But go on in the chapter to the next appearance of this man who knows one thing, — the critical event of life. See how concentrated it makes him. They ask him "Where is he your healer?" He says, "*I know not.*" "All I know is this." To know one great fact and to be full of it makes him unwilling to guess or conjecture about other things. He either knows or he knows not. He has learnt what true knowledge is. He is perfectly willing to say "I know not," with regard to anything which he does not know as he knows that one thing. He is entirely willing afterward to say to the Pharisees, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; I know not him. Yet I know I was blind and now see." "The firm certain hold I have upon my great fact

shows me what real knowing is, and I do not know all things in that way and will not pretend to do so." He who most truly knows, is most willing to say "I know not." He does not mistake guess and conjecture and gossip and opinion for knowledge. We should save much stumbling and sad sorrow in life if we would make this distinction, if we would concentrate ourselves upon the facts, if we would not so often build the air-castles of conjecture and live in them as though their walls were of the solid masonry of real knowledge. Curiosity says, "Where is he?" tries to picture the Healer, and weaves bits of fiction into the story of truth. Or imagination helps out history, till you hardly know where one ends and the other begins. Every story from your neighbors, every report upon the street, we lean on them, and they give way just in the places where imagination has put in its patched bright additions. Men cannot, do not distinguish between knowing and guessing.

But the disaster is most serious in the spiritual sphere, when one does not know where to say "I know," and where "I know

not," when religion is only a broad field of conjecture. For instance, churches have separated on mere matters of conjecture and opinion as if they were facts to be known. They have persecuted those who held to the simple Gospel facts and beyond them said, "I know not." Individuals, curious or imaginative, build their religion out of the multitude of unessential things which can here never be known as fact, — the origin of evil, predestination, spiritualism, the exact nature of the future life. They are anxious regarding such points, forgetful that, the one fact of practical religion, — man's salvation and purification by Christ, — being known, you may for the present safely say, "I know not" to other items, which cannot be yet known in the same personal way. This is the value of the great fact of the Gospel. It is like a firm iron brace that you grasp in the midst of some tugging storm of wind, which tries to lift you off of substantial footing into the air. So one whose whole nature grasps with faith the substantial fact of Christ's redemptive healing, which he knows and feels in his own history, is steadied against all the airy

gusts of conjecture and opinion, and cannot be carried into their shifting sphere. He has found the fact of life, and to all else which is not held in the same way can say, "I know not." That iron fact has made a decided concentrated man of him.

But the same chapter goes on to furnish another instance of the strengthening value of this one possession of the healed man. It makes him a messenger, a continual repeater of his wonderful history, as often as he can relate it. He goes from one circle to another telling his simple story, "He hath opened my eyes." Any man, however ignorant and humble, is listened to if he have a genuine event of life to tell. Facts never grow old. Chroniclers retain their place in literature and in human reference, while the mass of mere published human opinion and speculation grows obsolete and antiquated, and goes out of sight, succeeded by a better speculation or opinion. But facts remain. To make a man, then, a continual messenger, one who may go to all, who may speak over and again and always, he must have a solid event to narrate. "One thing I know," such

a man says, "I have something to show," and it is as wonderful at the last showing as at the first. "I will repeat it again and again. What I say and exhibit is not merely a product of my fancy or thought, which may be superseded; it is one of the solid deposits of God's providence, one of the substantial products of the forces of the universe which is to remain." It is not the mere smoke arising from the chimney of the manufactory, to float away forever after its first bright appearance; it is the solid, substantial, metallic product within the factory left by the operation of forces. So this man, the relater of a fact, represents Christianity. Christianity has gone on from age to age, from circle to circle, giving its simple, solid, eventful message, — human redemption, and enlightenment by Christ. While lecturers, disputants, philosophers have puffed upward their bright column of smoke before the world, have been heard and have gone, this religion of a fact goes on from day to day, still repeating the everlasting Gospel, not teaching a speculative morality illustrated by fable, like heathendom; not giving abstract opin-

ions upon the best ways of reaching goodness or truth or happiness, like our modern moralists, which may be superseded by still other methods; but proclaiming a great event, — Christ's redemption from sin, — true always as a fact in life, and inspiring all goodness and happiness. This is what Paul meant by saying, "I desired to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." "I found my preaching on a great fact. That makes it a perpetual message, and me a continual messenger." I wish we could catch for ourselves this great characteristic of Christianity. Christianity is the most practical of things. It says, "If I come to men of life, I must have a bit of real life to tell, that is, an event, the Cross." If you are to be always fresh, then, not to be superseded or set aside, if you expect always to have influence and usefulness, always to have something to tell men and to give them, your life must have this substantial foundation, — a fact, a spiritual fact to tell. Your advancing years or weakening senses will not diminish the force and truth of that. The growing culture of the world does not make

it any the less true. The crowding in of lesser events does not remove it. The smoke of opinions does not change it in any point. The fact of your salvation, your being born blind and being healed by Christ, your redeemed Christian character, will go on preaching and teaching forever, from one circle to another, to all men, at all times.

But, still again, as this man so full of his story tells it, the Pharisee says to him, "Give God the glory. Do not ascribe it to this man. He is a sinner." They endeavor to hush his statement by a command, "Do not say He, Jesus, opened mine eyes." That is to say, these men were striving to do what has been a very usual human infatuation,— to legislate against events, by simple authority, as when the old Saxon king sat by the water's edge and with his kingly decree forbade the sea to come nearer, or its tide to rise higher. These men did not appreciate the firmness of a fact. They did not know that commands were merely pebbles that rebounded shattered from its rocky undisturbed surface. All men fall into this error, good men legislating against an evil fact, evil men legislating

against a good fact. To bid it be different is nothing at all. This is another value of the blind man's possession. He was instantly above all mere commands, all mere human assertion of power. Commands and power may drive men from your land, may change all circumstances, may inaugurate a new series of events. They can never change or evade an accomplished fact. It is written in the rock of time, and nothing can destroy it. The world still revolved, although the papal edict was that it was stationary. This is the value of Christianity always, — its exaltation of a man above earthly power. The world, by its persecution or force and might, says, "Deny Christ." But if you conceive of Christ and his Gospel as the world's great fact, if His influence is an event in your own life, you will be able to answer, "How can I deny a fact? I should only stultify myself to do that. One thing I know, I was blind and now I see. That will last after your command has been forgotten." There is no fear, no servility in this man who is armed with his great conscious fact of life, beggar as he had been of old. He meets Pharisees

face to face. He suffers excommunication. Dangers and losses are nothing to him in comparison to his one bit of paramount knowledge. They cast him out. Ay, and the worse for them. They cast out the only man resting on solid truth, and remained upon their fictions. They kept the parents within the temple who had no personal sense of this great event, and who, therefore, were servile and fearful of these Pharisaic commands. It is the old picture of falseness and servility casting out truth, and in so doing casting out all their strength. The man whose basis of life is a Divine event of life is the man of independence. That is the process by which Christianity puts strength into human character by furnishing it with one great transcending positive statement. "Jesus has by Himself cleansed man."

I have this week been face to face with a horrible iniquity in one of our city institutions, covered and excused by every moral sophistry. And I have seen how little independence in religion there is. I could not help feeling that those who so apologized had taken their feet from the one fact, that

the Cross has taken away all sin. All sin is horrible, nothing will justify it, no needs of your profession whether medical or clerical. No difficulty changes the view of sin. No trimming a fact; it is too hard a thing.

But once more, as this man goes out into the outer cold solitariness of excommunication, yet happy and warm in the garment of the consciousness of that wonderful miracle, repeating it to himself and forgetting his blind excommunicators, Christ meets him, and says, "Now you must believe on me, for you have seen me." Think how it must have sounded, how the warm heart must have been doubly grateful for that word "seen." "Yes, I see at last, I see, I who was blind." It is as if Christ were echoing his own thoughts, his own one piece of all-absorbing knowledge. Now that piece of knowledge must lead to belief. Fact must lead to faith. That is the last great value of fact to human life, it fosters personal *faith*. A fact merely means a thing done, and there must be a doer, greater in his invisibility than the great thing itself in its visibility. Brethren, that is the faith of

Christianity; it rests on real events, on actual things done, a wonderful historical work of Christ, showing sin overthrown in all its forms and effects. Christianity does not ask faith with no basis. But it furnishes the greatest event of history as a foundation, an event happening to us and yet not through our means; and any man full of that great event, will say, "I will and must believe in its doer." Just as the building which has the broadest base upon the ground can rise to the highest upward point in safety, so he who is fullest of the greatest seen fact of life, is fullest also of the richest, most aspiring, most practical and most spiritual faith. This man no sooner begins to use his bodily eyes, and to discern material objects, than he also believes. In the first possession of his new sense of sight, he might have claimed naturally to see only, not to believe. But no, he adds to it that better spiritual sight, faith. He feels that this great fact means something more than itself. It means an originator and a design, and therefore he believes.

This is the final effect of that one thing known. It casts him out of the Jewish tem-

ple indeed, but it brings him close to Christ. It has made him thoughtful of self; it has made him concentrated; eager to tell and proclaim; independent and fearless; but these effects of it would be all incomplete if it did not bring him in faith to Christ. Oh, believe it, that is the height of progress. That is the acme of character, to be united to Him who atoned for all sin, who brings all hope, who breathes all strength, who gives all holiness. This man has lost all other company, but he has gained Christ's, a company into which his great possession has led him, and where he may enjoy it forever. I can pray no better or other prayers for any life here than that, that holding tightly the Gospel fact it may go through all its losses to Christ, that its losses may lead it to Christ through its possession of Truth. I may speak to some who have been separated by death or any other cause from near and dear ones. Oh, may that separation, whatever its cause, only bring you the more closely to the Lord who searches for you especially in your loneliness, as he sought and found the solitary man, whom he had healed, and who had been separated from neighbors and friends.

Thus, my friends, I have tried to show the strengthening value of a great fact to a life in several ways. Let me conclude by showing you from the same chapter why the Gospel fact is the very greatest a life can hold and have. First, this man was full of this great event, he considered it great above all others, because it opened the eyes of one who was born blind. It has changed a natural condition. The utmost man can do is to bring man back to nature, to develop nature, or to remove obstructions which have accumulated and checked natural action. It is only a divine fact which is superior to nature, which is supernatural, which has power over a natural condition. So is the Gospel the greatest of facts for a man to have, for it is one above nature, it has taken away the natural sin, it has given a holiness which is not natural.

But for another reason is the Gospel fact the greatest of events. It has given that upon which all else depends. It gave this poor man sight. It did not give him wealth, independence, strength, happiness, knowledge. It gave him sight, which was the root of all

the others. It was a fundamental fact. It was the greatest of events to him, because it brought all else in its train. So is the gift of Christ. He does not give one gift, and man another. He gives the one thing which includes all others, — the healing of the nature which brings strength, happiness, knowledge.

But yet in a third way let us estimate the greatness of the Gospel event. It was just the one only thing which this man had never expected of any one else. He had sat and begged all else of men, but sight he had never asked. He had not even asked Christ for it. He was not looking for it. It was too good to be looked for. It came without effort or expectation of his. Ah, it is seldom that man gets more than he imagines. His dreams always run beyond his facts, his hopes beyond his possessions, except in the Gospel fact which gives us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, which gives us complete redemption of heart and nature, a thing which we cannot conceive in all its great completeness. It will surpass all our dreams in its great gift of purity and power and happiness and perfection.

These are some of the considerations which crown the event of the Cross as the greatest in human life; which made Christ such a wonderful Strengthener to the blind man of our chapter. Oh, my brethren, He waits also to enter our life and our consciousness.

THE MASTERY OF LIFE.

"I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."— St. John x. 17, 18.

These are the strongest words that human lips have uttered, I think; the strongest, because they give us a glimpse of what elsewhere we cannot find in man or his history, — the complete mastery and control of life. Men are carried on by the deep, quick current of life; and its excitement, its strength, its torrent, its change, all give them such sense of activity and movement that they believe that they are masters of life instead of its followers.

Let me ask you this morning to think of what real mastery and control of life would be, if we had it or could have it humanly;

and in this our Lord's words which I have read will help us.

To be the master is to have complete control of the material about you, to do whatever you will with it. It is to originate the purpose which it is to serve. If it works itself into a purpose different from or contrary to your own, you are no longer the master. If it overcomes your purpose, or if it gives you your purpose, or if it modifies your purpose, you are no longer the master in either case. In order to claim that title you must come with the idea full formed of what you are going to do. It is to be carried out completely, lastingly, without modification, and without suggestion from that out of which you fulfill it. And who ever did that with life? Where is the man in all your full human histories, in all your societies or businesses or governments, whose purpose has this power over life, who pursues it and fulfills it without danger, or modification, or suggestion from the facts of existence? Who comes to life as the workman comes to his clay or to his marble, and shapes out his idea precisely as he first has thought and

designed it, and leaves it fulfilled without that obedient material having demanded any change in the work? That is mastery, complete superiority. But how little of it you and I have! Your very purpose in life, of which you speak so proudly, have you not got it by living? Life has given it to you by its experiences in a great degree. Life revealed it to you. Life opened its page to you, and told you to read it there. You did not come with it independently originated. The years lead the boy to his profession, and the man to his work.

And when you had conceived it, when you had said, "*I will*," "That is my purpose," did life flow liquidly and obediently into your mould, and stay there, and harden in it lastingly? Who has just the life he planned? Who is there, who, if not disappointed or crossed in his earthly purpose, has not yet had to take the modifications which life has brought, and insisted on having incorporated in that purpose, not at all like a servant? Where is the home which was planned in the architect's office of your pride? How the course of days and years has shaped it,

if not destroyed it! Where is the love which your heart purposed? Its current has not run smooth as you thought. Life and its contacts have given it a shape you never thought of.

And when you begin to see your purpose, or something like it, coming out of life, what control have you over it and its continuance? You have time to say, "Yes, that is the shape of my wish, of my plan," and you or it are hurried away. It runs into some great purpose that you little thought of. It contributes to the formation of some bit of individual or national life, that you never knew or will know; and life mocks your mastery again. Look about you and see today if you can find one result in history which is left as its originators planned. It is as if you bent over the side of a boat. and dragged your hand through the yielding water, and caused a ripple and an impression for a few inches, which the river's full flow quickly and completely gathered into itself, and swallowed up in its own great purpose. Do you not feel how at best we only contribute to a purpose of which, and of the

form and end of which, we ourselves know nothing; that life is using us instead of our using life; that we do not make the stream run our way, but it carries us its own way?

But even suppose that a man cares not whether his purpose be lasting, if for a moment he reaches the place at which he had aimed. If he stands there where he had struggled through life to be, if he has made life carry him there, is he not master and victor? May he not say, as the soldier who dies in victory, "I die happy?" The hands that stiffen at that moment, are they not after all a conqueror's? Oh, but think if the mastery of life does not include something else. It is not only to carry one's own purpose for a moment; it is to do it in such a way as to show that you are not indebted to life's favor for it; that it is not a gift to you, that you will take it at your own time, as one who is completely, unanxiously master; that you will not be hurried by the thought, "*Now* life is offering me my prize, if not now, never," but can quietly choose the time of acquisition when it is best, and then reach out the hand and take it. How

the most successful men, as we judge them, have had life say over and over again to them, "Wait till I choose to give you your wish; it is my grant, after all; you may have it as my favorite, perhaps, and must take my time."

But stop again. Mastery of human life, is it not something vastly more than all of this? Is it not to be above counting it indispensable, to use it only as one help in the working out of the great purpose, to lay it down and yet win the aim by other help, to lay it down as a workman puts down a tool and takes it again? Must not you be above your instrument, be able to live without absolute dependence on human existence for the fulfillment of the purpose? Just as soon as your human being can say that to you, "You need me to work out your plan," —it has a control over you; you will do anything to keep it; you are its servant. You need to be able to say, "No, I can do it independently of you, even if I have not the use of your power for the moment." But who of us is so boldly independent as that? Who can work out his human purpose with-

out the help of human life? Who does not feel that all hope is gone with life; that it is all he has to rely upon to work with? All that he has will he give for his life. We are absolutely dependent upon it, however strong and original our purpose, and however well forward we are in reaching it.

But I must go yet one great step farther in this description of what it is to be a master of human life. It is this. Suppose you were independent of this human life, yet you are not master of it, if it can withdraw itself and you have no power to keep or resume it. If, after showing your ability to do without it, it were able to keep away from you, if you had no power to take it again, you would not be its master. You might not be its servant and dependent, but you certainly would not be its lord unless you could call it to you when you wanted it again. You may be able to show another man that you are not his dependent by dismissing him; but he is not yours, you are not his master unless you can call him obediently to you. That is the complete mastery of human life, not only to work out your purpose independ-

ently of it, but to recall, resume it, to take it again when it has been laid down. Oh, how we shrink into smaller and smaller characters as such a definition of mastery goes on. We have absolutely no such control over human life. Let it once ebb, and we cannot command the tide. It is under no call from us. We may scorn it and say, "I do not care for it;" and yet that is an empty scorn; it contains no positive power over it. Once let it be gone and it is like the bird out of your hand, impossible for you to regain. A man may deceive himself into the idea that he has some of this mastery of life till it goes from him, and he cannot take it again.

I know all this seems to be an unnecessarily sad accumulation, all this description of human life giving us our purposes, controlling them, modifying them, erasing them, giving them whatever little short fulfillment they may have, indispensable to them, obeying no summons of ours, pursuing its own purpose, which we know not. I know that all this seems as if we were piling a thunder-cloud in the sky of life's cheery activities, with the great depressing thought of fate, which all

men dread, but which all men have, however they try to forget it in activity or frivolity. But there is only one reasonable way to get rid of it, and I do most earnestly wish to be able to describe and recommend that to you this morning.

I take it from my text. I find, in the midst of all this history of man and his life, — believing himself master, and yet never so in reality, — One life which has no such feature, which could never have been troubled by the thought of fate. There is One among all human existences which bears all the marks of the Mastership of Life, which claims from all the title of Lord and Master, and says boldly, "So I am," one royal life among men. If you think of Christ our Lord a few moments as we have been thinking of ourselves, you will see how completely and grandly he is the Lord of life.

First of all, He comes to human life with His own purpose fully formed, and self-originated. He did not find His mission after His birth. Life did not force it upon Him that men needed forgiveness and saving. It was not life's great pictures of trouble and sin

that aroused His purpose, as it was not His sympathy of a common existence that first suggested it. No, but He was born into life with it. "This commandment have I received of my Father." "For this cause was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world." "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "The work that Thou gavest me to do." So He describes it. The Father's business is in His breast before He has seen the great world, and the great misery humanly. He brought a Divine purpose to earth, "the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," Oh, how royally, how different from us comes Christ! His plan, His purpose is all made: to seek and to save that which is lost; His, just as much and just as fully in the cradle as on the Cross; the only life on earth which has known all that it was meant to do. Do you not recognize the Master of Life?

And now go on further, and see how absolutely without change that purpose of Christ's life is carried out. Not a feature is altered; not a circumstance is varied, nor any addition made. His human life does

not modify or diminish, or add to His purpose. He says at the end, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do." It is accomplished just according to the heavenly purpose. Human life has left no mark of its influence upon it. Its fulfillment is just as He has described it over and again to His disciples, — the betrayal, the mocking, the scourging, the crucifying, the three days of burial, the resurrection. Life has no power to change it in the smallest particular. What a grand complete work it was, even when you look at it in that way alone! So perfect at the beginning, life could add nothing to it by its full experiences. It was so strong that it fulfilled its minutest point. Can you help again recognizing Christ as the Master of Life?

But this royal purpose, will not human life override it, and outgrow it, and destroy it, or gather it into itself and its own purpose, like the little rift that your hand makes in the water of the strong river? Will it remain as it was planned? How those words, "The Everlasting Gospel," answer our question! "By one offering He hath perfected

forever them that are sanctified." "I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it." "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ." It is the one purpose that is to remain. What is there but the Word of God which endures forever? Oh, what is there to-day in the world which remains unchanged but the salvation of Christ? What is there which human life has not touched and varied but the Gospel? What is there superior to the wear of life but the redemption of the lost? Oh, can you come here from the lost and changing governments, aims, and hopes of all human life, can you come to the hearing of "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," and not again recognize Him as the One Master of Life?

But did life give to Him the fulfillment of His purpose, as it does to its favorites, granting the prize to Him in its own time as its favor? I do not know anything more quietly grand about Jesus' life, than the way in which He chooses the very time when it shall all be done. "My time is not yet come."

"I lay down my life of myself," He says continually. He puts aside many and many an attack that is just as violent as that by which He at last suffers crucifixion, as it were to show that He regulated the time. He knew the time when all things were ready, when He would reach His hand and take the great result of man's salvation. It was no gift to Him at the time, which life offered. He did not seize on an unexpected or quick opportunity. "I must work to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected," He says, conscious of controlling the time completely. He takes no favors of life. He is not indebted to life for help or opportunities. The time and opportunities are all chosen long before. Christ, waiting for the time He has chosen, working till that time, never hurried, never anxious about chances, — how nobly the figure of our Lord goes to Gethsemane, saying, "Come, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Can you watch Him and hear Him say, "I lay down my life of myself," and not recognize again that He is the Master and not the favorite of Life?

But how his Mastership grows upon us! Still let me go on to show you how His great purpose is independent of human life. Life is not indispensable to it as to our purpose. He can fulfill His purpose in loss of life, and by loss of life. Death fulfills it. "I lay down my life of myself. This commandment have I received of my Father." The Divine purpose is not lost, but won, by passing into death. "I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto me." How little is human life necessary to His purpose who died that we might live! How little dependent on this human existence is that love of God which came from heaven, which has heaven's life, which is greater than death, which survives the loss of earthly life! "Keep your life and come down from the cross, and we will see and believe," the shallow multitude cry at the crucifixion. But shall we not say very differently, with the centurion, just because He so cried out and gave up the ghost. "Truly, this, so dying, was the Son of God." Shall we not see that to keep life was not necessary to His Divine aim? — that He is the Lord of Life?

There is but one more addition. "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Here is the highest and last sign of the Master. Christ showed His disciples His hands and feet, warm with life and yet with the death-marks on them, and they cried, "It is the Lord."

He had not only done without human life, but He had called it back to Him by His own Divine spiritual will. It was completely at His will. He can take it up again as you would your garment. Oh, as He takes up again the human life He has redeemed, loving it so as to die for it, and yet perfectly its Master, what a strange, strong figure He is! He does not despise it because He is so completely its Lord. It is not necessary to Him, and yet He calls it to Him and wraps it around Himself, valuing it, glad in it, proclaiming that we have an High Priest to be touched with the feeling of our life. Oh, life has found its Master — the Jesus at the right hand of God, the Saviour who is the Prince of Life. Can you not see how the river of life flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, where Christ, the ascended God-man sits, who has

taken human life again? Can we not now fully see Christ as alone holding the mastery of life, above what we call Fate? Are those not the strongest words a human mouth ever spoke? "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again!" How inadequately our lips say them! Who of us can use them?

And yet we can share them! I should not have carried your thoughts through all this description of Christ's Mastership, if there were not something for us in it all, if the disciple were not as his Lord, if He had not given us all things that the Father gave Him, if it were not that "as He is so are we in this world." Christ would take us all into His great purpose. Follow your own human purposes alone, and then indeed, as we have seen, life is your master. But become our Lord's follower, have a share in His purpose, have a real part and place in the salvation of Christ, and then you, too, have a superiority to life, a mastery of life. Then you, too, are living for an aim which life did not give you, an

aim which life cannot modify or destroy, an aim which will be fulfilled in its own chosen time of heavenly happiness, an aim that can survive death and the loss of human life, an aim which in a resurrection will be able by its power to resume life as its obedient servant. Oh, is not all this, — this Christian power, this Christian superiority to fate and the current of life, — is it not better than the weak way in which we battle with life and are never masters? Oh, my friends, what is our purpose in life, yours and mine? That is the question which comes out of our sermon this morning. We cannot ask too carefully. Is it something which this life has given, and shaped, and will take? Something which depends on this life and will be swallowed up by it? Is it this bit of money, or land, or success? Or is it the one eternal purpose of God, which is above this life, which shall swallow up all other aims of life, which was that for which this life was made, which uses it, and yet is superior to it, and can survive its loss and win the triumph in death and a new life. Are you following with Christ, aiming for the salvation, the purity, which He

has won for you and for a whole world? Are you gaining it for yourselves and others every day? If so, you are higher than fate, stronger than life. If so, you shall be crowned with your Saviour as masters of life. If so, when He shall appear in His glory, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory, crowned as He is, a king with Him, and a king of life.

Now unto Him who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, let us ascribe honor and power everlasting. Amen.

EPICUREANS AND STOICS.

"Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? Other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the Resurrection." — ACTS xvii. 18.

PAUL'S experience in Athens gives us one of the most suggestive chapters of the New Testament; a chapter always noble and dramatic in its scenes; a chapter intensely human with its grouping of men of diverse thoughts, and faiths, and nations; a chapter very profound in the questions which come out of the meeting and grouping of those men. It is a moment of perpetual and universal human interest, this moment of our text, when philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered Paul, the Christian, with his preaching of Jesus and of the Resurrection. For it was the moment when the Gospel met

the two sides of human life together, and spoke to them together, and contrasted its oneness with their dividedness, its wholeness with their partialness, and showed its mission of reconciliation.

Who does not know what I mean when we talk of the two sides of life? Who is so young that he has not had life come up to him in the form of a question with something to be said on both sides? Who is so old as to have outgrown such questions? What day but presents one of them? What company whose conversation does not give one? How you walk under the same outward sky, and over the same streets with men and women who are looking at the other side of life from you, and you say, "I am out of sympathy with them!" Nay, how you fail to recognize one busy day as part of the same life with a day of relaxation! It seems as if you had two selves.

Does not the great earth itself give you a perpetual parable of your single life, and each single life upon it? How it turns between day and night! How the youngest scholar in our homes knows that while he stands in all the happy and full brightness of a

noonday sun, with every faculty alive and stimulated, there is a reverse side of the great earth's life, where the darkness of midnight is complete, and life is as silent as here it is noisy around us. How can the two conceive of one another, and each understand the reasonableness of the reverse state, *except* as both get a conception of a higher sun-life by which their life of light and shade becomes intelligible and reconcilable? And to-day, at this moment, how on one side of the earth the eyes are open, and on the other side the eyes are shut, in dependence on the same sun and in understanding of each other! I cannot think it is wrong to illustrate in this way Christ's coming to the two sides of life, each true in itself, but partial; both truths, but half truths; each to the other inconceivable except through the coming of Christ, the higher Light and the Reconciler.

Something of that sort the scene of Paul in Athens means to me, — the diverse partial tendencies of human life drawn into the higher single life of Christ. Epicureans and Stoics were alike and at one in encountering Christ and listening to Paul; they were con-

trary and separated when they listened to each other.

How strong the human temptation is to shut one's self up in his own natural side of life, is seen every day in the very divisions of our common Christianity. The way in which men, conscious of a common union of faith and of a higher light, yet turn upon each other, because they represent different sides of the full sphere of life, because one has a tendency to order and the other to enthusiasm, one to æsthetics and the other to dialectics. And yet, separate themselves as they will and do, one sunny gleam of the thought of Christ unites them. They listen to Christ and in Him is the substantial union.

But let us come closer to this scene in Paul's day at Athens. "Certain philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics encountered him." Men have named the reverse sides of human life, and all the grades between them, by different names in different tongues; but, after all, the names have meant the same thing, — the two-sidedness of life; and it is the same great issue at different points, just as you say America is the reverse of China, or

Europe of Australia. There is a reverse point to every land. But Paul met it in one of its commonest and most evident forms when he encountered in the streets of Athens Epicureans and Stoics. These two classes of men represented the two opposite points of the sphere of life. Both represented facts, but separated ones. Both represented facts which still exist as widely separated. One was a class of men and minds who had started from the very high truth that good was sure to be the highest happiness, and had degenerated quickly into the mere pursuit of happiness and pleasure, as if they were good and would bring good of themselves. These were Epicureans. And their opposites were Stoics, a class of men and minds who had started from the noble truth that the highest good involves and is hardship and bravery, and had as quickly degenerated into mere proud endurance, — pride in their own strength as the only good, and scorn of any gentleness or pleasure. One said, "It is a bright world, let us just enjoy it." Another, "It is a hard world, let us just endure it." One would become selfish in luxury; the other selfish

in strength and denial; the one was caught in sweetness, the other in bitterness; the one blinded by excess of light, the other by excess of darkness. They were the reverse sides of the globe of life. And yet could anything have been truer or nobler than the facts upon which they each rested? Is not virtue happiness? Is not virtue hardship and endurance? But half truths must degenerate into error. One side of human life by itself must deteriorate and become bad and selfish, and sink, just as one side of a scale without a corresponding weight upon the other side must fall. So the happiness of virtue, and the hardness of virtue, had become on either side mere self-enjoyment and self-confidence. So human life must fall, I think, into error, however high it begins, unless it encounters some higher life and light. It never has anything except its own one human tendency to rely upon, which runs away with it if not corrected, and the half truth becomes a whole error. Epicurus was a noble man, but the Epicureans were mean and sensual and slothful. Zeno was high-toned, but the Stoics, his disciples, were

wretchedly scornful and narrow. Oh, did you never wonder in the same way at a life among you which started with high qualities and theories, but through life's experience has become frivolous or bitter? Do you not know of youths, of men and women, who were sweet or grand with the finest of impulses; who seemed made to lighten or strengthen life about them; who started to do so; who felt the happiness that ought to belong to good, or the endurance and effort that should belong to it, and were eager to exert their influence of brightness or power; the bright girl, or the ambitious, high-spirited boy, — and you meet them long years afterwards, mere selfish pleasure-seekers, enjoying for self, or mere selfish misers of money or life, enduring for self? Do you not feel and fear, perhaps, that you may be so degenerating this year yourself? If so, what does it mean but that every half truth kept to itself without encountering Christ runs into its selfish form, and becomes fatal error; that every side of life without the divine light of Christ is powerless to hold its true sweetness and strength? The best of lives at its best is

one-sided, and alone, without Christ, will degenerate. Its noble tendencies will narrow upon self. It will surely end in meanness and error.

Paul then meets these degenerate representatives of noble reverse sides of life, Epicureans and Stoics; and they are *together* as they encounter Paul. In their degenerate form they have a common union, — not union in a higher life, but in a lower life, in a common selfishness. When self-enjoyment meets self-confidence, they can join hands while they may wonder at each other. They can appreciate each other's devotion to self, while they may laugh at each other's way of showing it. And so they may join company like light and shadow as they approach and encounter Paul. It is self joining all its hosts as it meets the unselfish Christ and encounters His Gospel. The danger to self from the Gospel unites the host of selfishness in its bright Epicurean uniform and its grim, Stoic armor, — luxurious and hard antagonists uniting against a common enemy, instead of generous antagonists ready for a common reconciler. Is it a strange alliance? And

yet your own single life may show the same thing, the armor under the silk. How much you may endure for pleasure's sake; how you toil selfishly in order to enjoy selfishly; and yet the toil and enjoyment are perfectly out of sympathy with each other. You for this moment will endure, and relax the next, and in one moment be out of the atmosphere of the other. There is nothing in common between the two but the thought of self. They join together while they despise each other, and are at variance with each other, and are ready to separate from each other. That hollow union is the best the earthly life can make between the two sides, which say, "I ought to be happy and I ought to endure." As divided they are as ever. The same great city clock-bell strikes the hours for the boy on his vacation, or the players at their game or ease in the garden, and for the merchant's or laborer's or mechanic's toil. But there is no real union in that common clock-stroke. The two ideas of enjoyment and endurance go on seemingly as hopelessly separate as ever, whether in one life or two lives.

Unless Christ meet them and their union be in what Paul preached, Jesus and the Resurrection. Let that be my supposition this morning during the remainder of my words to you. "What is it all worth? I had better enjoy myself," says one sort of life. "What does it all amount to? I must endure," says the other. What must happen when Jesus and the Resurrection are preached with the conviction of a Paul?

First, this, and, my friends, it is the great thing which the Gospel was meant to do, and I beg your closest attention to it. The Gospel is bent on giving the two divine motives, a divine Person and a divine Future, Jesus and the Resurrection. It does not announce duties; it brings warm, stimulating motives. Let me tell you just what I mean. Suppose one of your hearts longs for happiness, and happiness of the true high sort, happiness that shall not be selfish, the ambition of the first noble Epicurean, the highest dream that the full heart of man ever has, the dream that in the happy circle of duty employing every faculty harmoniously you can be completely and profoundly content. The Gospel does not

meet you with the old unimpressive maxim, "Be virtuous and you shall be happy," true and dull as all maxims are. It does not preach maxims but motives. It preaches Jesus, who is the deep love of God for you, Him whose love and strength has come from the high heaven for you, come to the deep sin for you, come across the breadth of the world to you, come through the long years to you. Return His love, and you are in the happiness of virtue at once. The happiness of His companionship is the happiness of virtue. In His company you reach that fulness of joy. And now see, it is a happiness which also includes endurances. It is no luxurious happiness. It is not the happiness that comes from an indolent, inactive self. It does not depend on circumstances. It comes from the love of a Person, of Jesus the Lord. Am I bound to Him? Then I am happy, notwithstanding how self is put down, or how circumstances change. I may have to struggle to a distant work every morning and return tired every night. I may have to endure any other of the manifold things that each different person here thinks destroys his happiness, but

if I have learnt Jesus with Paul's earnest belief, if His personal love fills my grateful nature, my happiness has nothing to do with any of them. Happiness is not a mere luxury, not a quietness, not a favorable arrangement of circumstances. But it is my friendship with Jesus, which any man can have, and with which any man can endure, and be at once both as good an Epicurean as Epicurus, and as good a Stoic as Zeno.

Now turn it over and begin with the other side; not how men think of happiness, but how they think of endurance. Suppose that a man says, "It is hard for me to do my duty, to be dutiful and faithful. I suppose I must just nerve myself to it and go to it as a necessity." He and you are apt to think he is very brave, and is acting just in the right spirit. You let him go off in that way, and even give him your encouragement. But the Gospel never left a man in that way. It never told a man to go and do a thing because he had to do it, and had better make the best of it, and go with a good grace. But it preaches Jesus as Paul preached Him to the Stoics as well as Epicureans. "Do it, bear it,

with Jesus and for Jesus. Go to it out of no necessity, but for the love of the Lord, who sets and leads the toil or suffering, and has borne so much for you. Can you not deny self for Him and His commands?" The Gospel does not preach duty so much as the personal motive of duty, gratitude to Christ, a desire to deny the self which raised His cross, a desire to bear the cross with Him, a desire to obey Him. And then, see, such an endurance must be also happiness. Every self-denial is as sweet as a conversation with the Lord. Every cross borne is a new joy of Christ's companionship. Every duty is happy with the sense of the Master's love. And the Christian Stoic is the happiest of Epicureans, and says with Peter, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." As the Gospel gives no effeminate happiness, so now it gives no bitter bravery, no dreary courage, but a joyful endurance that is happier than any earthly delight in selfish pleasures; and the two sides of life are one in that preaching of Jesus which Paul brought to Stoics and Epicureans.

But Paul gave them another teaching, "Je-

sus *and the Resurrection;*" another motive, not only a divine Person to love, but a divine future to reach. Enjoyment and endurance had become simply different ways of getting through the present world, and they knew nothing else. The Epicurean said, "This is all there is; let us try to enjoy it as we can." The Stoic said, "This is all I know of; let us try to bear it as we must." But enjoyment and endurance are two very different things when the Resurrection is announced to them, and the Epicureans and Stoics both encounter Paul. A present opening into a future changes both of them. See what it does for happiness. It makes it no longer the happiness of present possession, but of anticipation and preparation. It makes it active and brave. It is no longer the happiness of a man who sits in the midst of his gathered harvest and eats of his fruits luxuriantly. It is the happiness of one who is enduring the care and toil of preparation and exposure in view of a future harvest. So the Resurrection, the truth of a Future, says, "This is not your rest, not the mere enjoyment of these little fruits of earth, but the

enjoyment of preparing fruits for a heavenly future. That is an enjoyment which will include much and long endurance; which will give a man pure happiness while it requires sincere patience; which will make the two sides of life one, and join Epicurean and Stoic.

And see on the other side how Paul's truth of a resurrection changed endurance. It is no longer a bit of stern proud resolution not to give up, to laugh bitterly and bear it hopelessly, but it is a bravery that is happy also in the great hope of result, a crown laid up, a prize at the end of the race. That alone sends cheerful sunlight through the workshop of life, the knowledge that it is a preparation for a divine future. Do you not believe that Peter went to his preaching, after he learnt that Christ had risen, much more happily than he went to his fishing when he thought Christ was dead, and that he had just to go back and win his daily bread in the old dreary way? One was endurance with a rich future of results, the other was endurance under a mere present load of necessity. The one was happiness, also, the other was bitterness. So the glad light of a resurrection

makes the Christian Stoic as light-hearted as the happiest of Epicureans. So life's two sides help each other, and it is both sweet and strong.

He preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection, the two new motives, — a divine Person and a divine future, a divine love and a divine hope.

THE WAITING CREATION.

"The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God." — ROMANS viii. 19.

THIS is St. Paul's expression, in its highest form, of a principle which is true throughout all life: the dependence of the whole of anything upon the destiny of its best or strongest part. The safety and independence of a country depends on the safety of its capital; the strength of a city upon the strength of its citadel; and farther back yet, the strength of a citadel on the safety of its magazine. Always is there a core, a heart, an inner circle of life, upon which the whole organism waits and depends, whose history and whose destiny are the main points of effort and interest, to which everything else contributes and is secondary. So has creation a core, a central circle, upon which it waits and depends, namely, the Sons of God and their

destiny. Theirs is the one main history to which all else contributes, and upon the development of which the welfare of the whole rests, and to it the creature or creation looks forward. It is the dependence and waiting of the whole upon the destiny of its best and strongest part, seen in its highest form. First let us think of the general principle and see how true it is, and then apply it in Paul's own way.

The welfare of the whole is the welfare of its best part, or, the development of the best part is the benefit of the whole. I have named some illustrations of it already. Let me point out some instances of the danger of its neglect. You all have seen or have read in history the lamentable results of an aristocracy, or a nobility, which claims to be the nation's best part, and yet whose history has nothing to do with the benefit of the whole nation; which takes away the people's farms to make its own forests and hunting-grounds; which overthrows the people's cottages to erect its own palaces; which sheds the blood of the people for the wars of its own glory or aggrandizement. You feel then

that there is a great law of right and of nature contradicted; the welfare of the whole is no longer dependent on the history of its strongest part, or that which claims to be so. This is the danger of nobilities.

Or look on the other side of the question. There are as lamentable results when a people ignores its best class, and says, "Our welfare has nothing to do with theirs; our destiny is not wrapt up in theirs;" and cries, "Put men like our average population into office; dignify the commoner or the worse elements of our state; glorify our lowest." It is our own danger, the danger of representative government; the danger of losing the sense of dependence on the history and development of the strongest part, and demanding that the weakest and the poorest elements be thrust forward, — the men of mere wealth, or the available men who can draw most votes, or the men of loud and shallow oratory, or the men that are most like the commoner mass of opinion, — so-called representative men. It is all a fatal neglect of the principle that really the organism of a nation looks eagerly forward and

waits upon the welfare of its best and highest portions. An aristocracy severing itself from the people, and a people despising or ignoring its noblest portions, they are equally bad and unpromising spectacles in history or government. Now, with these two practical instances of our truth in our mind, see how Paul applies it. He says there is a great organism, — God's creation, the *creature* as he terms it, — which is eager for the enthronement of its best part, which is the "sons of God." Their triumph is the triumph of its true laws of order and right, and their welfare is its welfare. Their history is *its* central history. The completion of this history of the sons of God is that for which creation waits, that which it assists, and which is the one anxious end of its effort. They are its men of hope, its color-bearers. As they prosper it shall prosper. They are the only ones that keep its order; therefore they are the figures upon whose progress the anxious gaze of the disordered creation is centered. That is St. Paul's picture, by which he tries to inspire his brother sons of God.

"Creation and its great desire for order waits eagerly upon you, follows you with an anxious expectancy, depends upon you and upon your destiny. You are its standard-bearers and the men of its hopes!"

Now stop a moment here and ask, why it is so? Why is it that the real hopes of creation rest upon the sons of God, not upon its civilization, its learning, its commerce, its sciences, its improved government, its treasures, in themselves? Why is it that not upon any of the human developments in any form does creation rely, but upon the sons of God, as its possible liberators and elevators?

Remember that God's creation is only in its true condition when it is in connection with its Creator; it longs for unobstructed communication with its Creator; it pants for the free breath of an atmosphere in which everything acknowledges the Creator, and works according to His will. Now, who are those whose triumph means such a state of things? Not the men of science necessarily, whose discoveries may even separate them in pride from the Creator; not the men of wealth, who become self sufficient; not the commerce

which loses itself in satisfaction with the present and never looks upward to the Creator. Such men do nothing toward connecting creation with God. Luxury, arts, wisdom, civilization, in themselves and by themselves, are not the hopes of creation for its complete restoration. No, but the sons of God, they who are devoted to a Creator's will, they who are living in reconciliation with Him through Christ, and in continual and holy recognition of Him. In godliness is the creation's hope of full restoration to its true place and order. Creation sees godless men using its treasures and laws, plunging into its depths and heights, holding rule over all its glory and all its wealth, and feels all the while that it is not really prospering; it is getting out of communication with God its Maker. It is like a nation whose nobility are selfish, and only think of their own aggrandizement. And, therefore, it longs for the triumph of the sons of God. Those who are connected with Heaven, its source, and, therefore, those alone in whom the great world of God sees its redemption and its future liberators, are the sons of God. In their growth and progress it sees

its own welfare; and the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, its only liberators. Others may gild its servitude and ornament its prison, but only in the sons of God, who have won and live in union with God, does creation see the freedom from its servitude. Only in their manifestation, in their future glory, will come the new heavens and the new earth, disenthralled, and free from disorder.

Creation waits upon the manifestation of the sons of God. It is a great picture. There is only one other like it, the earlier picture of the world waiting for *the* Son of God, the Christ. For many centuries of preparation the world passed through a long waiting for the Son of God, burdened with sin and failure, its air thick with promises and prophecies, its heart anxious with hope and fear, till in the fulness of time the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. And then the song of a creation hailed Him: "Peace on earth; Glory to God in the highest." And just as it waited the first of the sons of God, so again now it waits only with a more certain hope for the gathering of His brethren, the

redeemed of Christ, the sons of God. All contributes to their history and their destiny. All else revolves around that central point, and assists in the growth of its influence. "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men," writes Paul. It is the grandest of moments when one of us can feel this, can look out on wars, and changes, and the progress of earthly interests, and yet say and believe, — "Creation depends on the history not of these, but of the sons of God. It is devoted to their history and their final triumph. That is the central aim of all, to which all contributes." Therefore it is that our Lord says, "When ye hear of wars and rumors of wars — when these things begin to come to pass — your redemption is drawing near." All is contributing to the manifestation of the children of God. That is God's avowed central purpose. And, although we are blind to it, creation is confidently waiting for the triumph of its best part, its men of hope.

The manifestation of the sons of God — think how much the phrase means. In the original it is the "*uncovering*, the *revelation* of God's

sons, the lifting off from them of that which has hidden them, so as to manifest them. You come and stand before some great sculpture, or tower, or monument, or work of art, in the anxious day of its completion. It has never yet been seen as a whole. It has been covered with scaffolding, hid by the machinery which was necessary through its days of imperfection in order to work upon it and to complete it; and you cannot discern its form or glory. But the final day arrives, and the last stroke of the master's tool has been struck, and now, "Let it be uncovered," is his command. "Down with the concealment of that scaffolding and staging; disclose all its proportions. Let its grace stand in open sight of all men, unincumbered by the necessary coverings which its imperfection required. Let it be uncovered and manifested." Such is the meaning of the uncovering of the sons of God. Hidden here during the course of their preparation, and education, and discipline, and during the days of their imperfection, they shall stand disclosed at last in that final day of completeness at the Master's word announcing that the work is done. The last

blow is struck, the last discipline, the last suffering, the last sacrifice, the last repentance, the last struggle, the last temptation. All that hid and overwhelmed them and prevented them from being seen in their education, shall have disappeared in the day of the uncovering and manifestation of the sons of God. A creation follows all that discipline, and waits anxiously for its end.

But is their own imperfection the only thing that hides the sons of God now and here? No. A country has been savage; its land is undisturbed, its riches are covered over, till wiser men come and uncover its treasures, open its mines, and look down at its waiting wealth of warmth and happiness, now at last manifested, but, till now, hidden by the ignorance of the surrounding unlearned nations. So shall God reveal and uncover, and manifest what has existed in a world which was ignorant of truth. The sons of God are manifested when they are brought out of the darkness of time, where man's ignorance has hid them, into the lighted wisdom of the kingdom of God, where is nought but complete appreciation.

Hidden both by their own imperfection, and

by earth's darkness, but uncovered by their own completeness and by heaven's light; such is the manifestation of the sons of God. Such is the moment of their enthronement for which the world waits, conscious that the exaltation and reign of these men of God's order will be the redemption of the creation and its restoration to the order and harmony of God.

Yes, brethren, that is the great uncovering, the great revelation of the future, the revelation of *persons*, of the sons of God. The first revelation of God, in His Gospel, is the revelation of His truth; the second revelation shall be that of His sons whom his truth has formed. First of truth, and then of personal character, the result of truth. The second revelation is the complement, the sequel of the first. First the Son of God is manifested in a Gospel; secondly, the sons of God ransomed by that love shall be themselves manifested. First truth and then persons.

We are all now living in the light of that first revelation of the Gospel of Truth. God grant also that we may stand and live in the future radiance of the second revelation and manifestation of persons, the uncovering of

the sons of God, of the brethren of Christ, of the persons whom the truth has made children of God.

And now I have some considerations to urge which come naturally and practically out of Paul's truth — that the whole creation of God feels its interest wrapped up in the destiny of the sons of God. First, it forces upon us the simple question, Do we join in creation's expectation? In whose success, in the success of what class of interests, do you consider your own and your world's welfare most concerned? It is a great question. For there is no man of us, in this sanguine century, who does not sketch a future for creation, and sketch how that future is to be revealed, and what is to introduce it. One believes in the vast diffusion of knowledge as the great instrument. One in the wondrous increase of material appliances for activity, rail and telegraph and machinery, by which force is doubled and tripled. A third in the new modes of living and governing which he thinks are the hope of creation. Each man says, "Creation is waiting for this or for that human influence or instrument," and he

watches eagerly to see its growth. "No, no, brethren," Paul warns us. "The creation of God waits for the success of the sons of God. That is its hope. It yearns to work with its Creator; and godly men, children of God, are the only class who are bent upon that aim; the only class in whose success creation will see its great longing realized." Earthly influences, however active and shrewd, may develope creation to their utmost power, yet their very earthliness and earthly accompaniments, pride, strife, selfishness, hardness, ambition, keep creation out of its order, keep it enslaved all the while. It is simply like feeding your prisoner with dainty food. He is no less a prisoner. It is primarily a Divine influence for which creation looks and longs; and that power among men it sees only in the sons of God. One true prayer, one devoted work of a son of God, is doing more for the true future of God's world than the most magnificent of merely earthly inventions. Oh do not wait eagerly, do not think your success is in what the sons of man are doing. Join in the only expectation which shall be realized. Look forward

to the only future which shall surely dawn. Welcome the only liberators who can break the imprisonment and disorder which evil has caused. Let your hope also be with creation's, in the manifestation of the sons of God.

But another question. Are we members of this class on which creation waits for its glorification? Are we among those at the ceremonial of whose final triumph all creation shall cry in loud and grateful joy? Or shall we be overlooked in that day, passed by as those who have done nothing for the advancement of creation's real interests? Ah, brethren, it is a proud moment for any one, when a household or a city or a nation hails him as its liberator; or for a liberating army whom it meets with grateful acknowledgments on their triumphal march homeward. Flowers are at their feet; cheers of welcome fill their ears; a free land, free through them, blesses them as they pass. How much more when a whole creation lays its gratitude at your feet, and assists at your triumph, and says: "For the success of these men I have longed and waited; my welfare depended on them, and with their exaltation I am renewed and

restored completely." Will you be able to stand at the last among the sons of God and receive that ovation; or, sick at heart, will you stand aside and be overlooked in a creation's joy, as having contributed nothing to it? "This man has done no real good for us. He is not a son of God." Oh; my friends, nothing can so make a godly life strong and persevering in its struggle as this thought, "The whole creation is waiting upon my progress, is following my life, is involved in my triumph. I am among those who are the hope of a creation's restoration. All my temptations and my difficulties, my rebuffs and my gains, my weakness and my strength, are of infinite concern to the whole sympathetic creation in which I live, which is waiting eagerly for the great result of all the discipline, the manifestation of the sons of God. Every little calumny or temptation I overcome; every weakness I uproot, brightens the future of the world." That conviction will be a great inspiration for any one of us who can claim it and say, "I am humbly trying to be a son of God, and God grant I may not fail; for the creat-

ure world is interested in my struggle, and depends on the success of me and my little company."

Let me point out another practical bearing of Paul's truth, the dependence of creation on the welfare of its best part. Once realize that, and feel that in the success of the sons of God the world's true success is involved, and you cannot be selfish or narrow in religion. Men say, "I want to do nothing which I cannot see. I will not spend my efforts and my money beyond the reach of my own eye. I do not believe in Foreign Missions." Why, with a shout how St. Paul shames such narrow ness in God's sons! The whole creatureship of God's world is concerned in you, waits upon you, is attached to you, and shall share in your complete triumph. Will not that thought enlarge you, that you are the central figures of hope not to a house only, not to a parish only, not even to a diocese or nation only, but to the creation of God? The creation is your responsibility. Will you have no interest in such a dependency? Can you be narrow in thought of such a great truth? A man whose work only involves himself and his own

welfare may say, "I will be safe; I will only work right around myself;" but a son of God, whose welfare is the welfare of the whole, cannot worthily and properly say so. If he does, he is like a false nobility, claiming to be the highest class, and yet not making its interests the interests of the whole people. We, on whom an entire creation waits, cannot we believe in missions to the next continent?

But one more thought this morning. This picture of St. Paul's not only teaches us to have the activity of men upon whom creation waits, but gives us the reverse teaching as necessary to our life and true success, the teaching of patience, of quiet ability to wait. Creation waits in the midst of its disorder, waits patiently and quietly for its coming triumph. Look out on such a quiet day as this over God's world, as far as our weak eyes can see it, and watch how patiently the great creation waits. You can detect no hurry in its great natural seasons and cycles, no fever in its sure growth. The great uplooking earth is waiting in confidence. The universe looks down upon us, waiting God's days of manifestation. The great scroll of history still is unrolled as stead-

ily as ever. No hurried, hasty hands turn it. All waits the consummation, goes on toward it at an even, patient, quiet rate.

And yet, my friends, how often the very sons of God, for whom the creation so calmly waits, are impatient, and cry, "O Lord how long, how long? Is it forever? Wilt Thou not turn again and succor us? Save us and that soon!"

It is not right that children of God should be filled full of anxieties and worries about this page of history, about this experience of life, about this attack, and this eulogy upon themselves. Remember Christ's word, "My Peace I give unto you." If we are really the sons of God, may the peace of the Son of God rest upon us. Catching His inspiration, may we learn His patience too. May each of us be what St. Peter called himself, "A witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed."

THE NEW SONG IN THE SOUL.

"Singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord." EPH. v. 19.

"And they sung as it were a new song before the Throne: and no man could learn that song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, who were redeemed from the earth."—REV. xiv. 3.

THE first text from St. Paul is the necessary introduction to the second, from St. John. It is the inculcation of that Christian duty or state which shall have its fulfillment in the heavenly state described in the Revelation. They both suggest for us the necessary connection of inner and outer harmony of being. St. Paul incites us to it within the domain of earth. St. John shows us those who have arrived at it beyond the domain of earth. They represent the music of a perfected state, proceeding from a redeemed, harmonious nature, a nature which

makes heart-melody to the Lord. It is that old connection of inner and outer harmony which Plato so readily recognized, when he insisted that music was of supreme importance as an element of education; "because rhythm and harmony sink most deeply into the recesses of the human soul;" and, "because he that has been duly nurtured therein will have the keenest eye for defects, will commend beautiful objects, and gladly receive them into his soul, and feed upon them." It is that old thought of inner and outer harmony which made the old Roman rhetorician insist, that only a good man can be a good orator; and the modern English artist insist, that purity of purpose is necessary to success in Art.

What makes martial music noisy, and blatant, and offensive? It is when a spirit of mere savage quarrelsomeness is in connection with it. And what makes it majestic, and able to marshal and lead hosts? It is the force of national duties and earnestness, giving it commanding power. Our texts give the highest Christian form of this truth, the connection of inner and outer harmony. It

declares that no man can learn the new song who has not been redeemed in nature; none can sing it who has not made, first, melody in the heart unto the Lord. This connection of the two makes one a type of the other. It gives us music as the great mouthpiece and spokesman and representative of an internal harmony and melody. It tells us to think of what we call rightness or holiness of being, as a harmony, a concord, such as we know in music. Let us enlarge on this thought this morning; interpreting the inner melody of holiness by the outer melody of sound; which two are inseparable, say our texts.

First, my brethren, consider this in connection with the statement that holiness, goodness, is a concord. Every virtue is a harmony. It is the result of combining different and separate tendencies. It is complex. It is, as it were, a chord of the inner music, formed by striking different notes of character together, and combining them in one. And that is what makes virtue so hard of acquisition, and a virtuous, Christian life such a struggle.

The true graces are harmonies of different notes; are chords of character; not merely a single note of character, struck with a single finger, easily, and at once; but, each, a combination of various notes of character, revealed only by using all the hand, and both hands of life; including differing parts, and requiring earnest, anxious toil, before it is harmoniously and truly struck, — struck with pleasure to the great Hearer, to whose ear your character makes melody in your heart, the Lord. Look at some of the several virtues with me, and see if it be not so; that each one is a chord, a combination, a harmony.

Take love, or charity, the most winning and prominent of virtues. It is not simple. In its true height it is a combination. It is composed of the union of self-sacrifice and benevolence to others. It is not simply the bestowal of that which costs us nothing. The widow puts her two mites into the treasury, and she has two parts combined in her act of charity; sacrifice of self and pity of others. The rich man casts in his surplus, and there is at best but one quality in his act, a

pity of others. Unable to deny himself, he can not combine those two things which the poor widow brings together in her action. "Charity both suffereth long and is kind," Paul tells us. It has those two constituent parts; those two notes in its harmony, suffering and kindness. And merely to strike one note, merely comfortably to satisfy an instinct of kindness, and not to be willing to satisfy that kind instinct, if it costs self-denial; that is not Charity, in its full, difficult concord. And, therefore, Passion is never true Love; for it is selfish. It has no note of self-denial in it.

Or take another human virtue, true human Courage, and see its component parts. See how it too is a combination; a harmony of different notes. Who is the brave man, but he who, keenly alive to pain, tingling through and through with sensitiveness of danger and love of life, is yet, also, full of the sense of duty, and the glow of patriotism; and out of those two very different parts constructs the delicate, perfect harmony of his courage? Very different is his bravery from the brutal fearlessness of one who enjoys peril; one who seeks the battle or danger in despair, or in

animal excitement. There is but a single tone in this last lower courage. It is not a harmony of diverse human tendencies. It has not been a struggle, with such a man, to enter danger, as it has been with the nobler soldier, who has had by conscientious argument to reconcile, and combine in one full, difficult concord those diverse things, value of life and value of duty.

Or again, select a third one out of the catalogue of noble human characteristics; and see again how, in its true form, it is a harmony, a combination of differing elements. Take freedom, liberality, or liberty of spirit. There is a true and a false freedom. The false freedom is simply license. It has only one thought, — to do its own will, to get its own desire, to be unbound by others' will. It has no harmony. It has but a single note, a single tone, and it is easily gained. There is no struggle, no argument to reconcile and combine any differences in a melody. But there is a truer human liberty than this; that which Paul describes when he says "as free, but as servants;" one which strives, while doing its own will, to be sure

that it is also doing the will of God and truth; one which labors to combine obedience with freedom, to be obediently free, and to be freely obedient; to make it the freest action of the human will to do God's will, and to obey the commandments of His love and truth. That is a hardly-gained, but a very rich harmony. It is a hard chord of life to put together and strike with the weak, resisting human fingers; but when it is sounded it makes "melody in the heart unto the Lord," and gives delight to His detecting and rejoicing ears. Yes, be very sure it is a hard thing to reach true liberty, — not the easy task which orators describe it to the multitude.

Take still one more such example of the fact, that every virtue, in its true, essential form, is a concord, a combination of tones. You will find it in the trait of Justice. To be just is not a very simple operation. It requires, first, wisdom, judgment, intelligent power of discerning and discriminating. It requires, secondly, courage, freedom to announce the decision of wisdom without fear or prejudice. It requires, thirdly, temperate-

ness, power of self-restraint, that there be no excess, or passion, or overstatement of one's decisions in the vehemence of his convictions. Every act of justice must include these three. Let either be omitted, and its character of justice is endangered and lost. The courageous, temperate man, without knowledge of facts and men, will be unjust. The man wise and cautious, yet without courage, will also be unjust. The judge, well informed and courageous, yet intemperate, will also endanger justice. Therefore is that great virtue a combination of other virtues in regulation of each other. It is a combination of virtues, each a harmony in itself. And it is a delicate, difficult task to bring out the full complex elaborate concord of sounds. But once let a just man appear, and then all the world feels the order and melody of his balanced character.

These examples, then, will illustrate the truth that I have stated; that every virtue is a chord of character, carefully and harmoniously adjusted out of differing parts or notes, or tones of character. The combination of these chord-virtues makes the harmony of life. If your bravery, or charity,

or justice, or freedom has only one single element in it, it is a baser form of the true bravery, or charity, or justice, or freedom. If it is hard for you to be brave, just, charitable, or free-minded, do not be ashamed of it. Rather be glad, and rejoice in the fact, for it is a sign that you are hard at work upon the harmonies of life and nature; that you are picking out and spelling the rich melodies of which your nature and every nature is capable.

But let us think on a little further. The Bible calls human virtues and graces, "fruits of the Spirit," quite frequently. Their harmony is produced by the Spirit of God. And the Spirit is illustrated always by the "air" or "wind" in Scripture. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." And when the Spirit descended on the Apostles, it was as a "rushing mighty wind." The graces, the melodious virtues, are the result of this breathing Spirit of God. They are the fruits of the Spirit.

Have you ever stood and wondered at the wild sweet music of an Æolian harp, — held by no human hands, resonant under no human fingers, but swayed by the breathing winds of Nature, bringing forth its strange combined melodies? Such an instrument is the human soul. Strung and held by no human hands, with the spiritual breath of God the Spirit passing over its strings, seeking to awaken them to speak in those perfect harmonies which we call "virtues," but which the Bible calls "fruits," or results "of the Spirit." So St. Paul writes in our text, "Be filled with the Spirit, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." Heart-melody, the harmony of virtue, is the result of the Spirit; the air on the sensitive human harp-strings. Oh, let us not quench the Spirit. It is about us, fraught and laden with all the airs and strains of God; able and waiting to call them out of our hearts, and the materials of our character and nature. By it we may be able to make melody in our hearts to the Lord. By it we may strive to do here what the redeemed shall do by it at last before the Throne, in that land

of the Spirit. We may learn from the Spirit that perfect new song which can only be sung by a melodious heart and nature.

But take another sign that human rightness or holiness is a harmony, a concord of parts. You will find it in that word "Conscience," which denotes the action of our moral nature. There is nothing of which men talk so frequently, and yet which they are less able to define and describe precisely, than that which we call conscience. But its name in Greek, *συνείδησις*, and in Latin *conscientia*, gives its best and simplest definition. It is conscientia, or knowing with or in company with one's self, that is, a knowledge of right which the man's self recognizes and approves; a union of self and the knowledge of right which God has given us. That which the Bible calls a good conscience, or a pure conscience, and which we call a sensitive conscience, is one in which there is ready and intimate union and intercourse between one's self and his knowledge of right, one in which the harmony between self and God's inner law is good and continual; when the self does not try

to blind itself to right, but is in constant communication and agreement with it. And a poor, or an evil conscience, — what we term a blunted conscience, — is one in which there is not cordial intercourse between self and the implanted law of right; one in which self goes its own separate way without consulting always and sensitively its law of right. Now, then, by this simple definition, conscience means harmony, the combination of two different things, self and the inborn rule of truth. A nature in which these two are separated is a discord. Its words and acts jar on God's righteous ear. But the nature in which these two things combine in one and agree makes melody in the heart unto the Lord. A good conscience, then, is a great soul-harmony. That is the reason why its happiness gives such content to its possessor in all circumstances. His nature is all in concord, is performing a great melody within. And the rich notes of that inner melody are filling him with their own joy, so that he cares not for accusations, or poverty, or discomfort from without, so long as his true

conscience is so voiceful with happy harmony within.

> "There are in this loud stunning
> Of human care and crime,
> With whom the melodies abide
> Of the everlasting chime:
>
> "Who carry music in their heart
> Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
> Plying their daily task with busier feet,
> Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

What is that feeling of horror with which a man of tender, sensitive conscience sees a wicked wrong? It is the same as the shock to a sensitive musician, who stops his ears when a discord disturbs his sense of harmony. So a wrong action is a foul discord to the possessor of a good conscience, and, in distress and dismay, he stops, because of that jarring which disturbs the agreement of his self with right. Or, if that possessor of a sensitive conscience stumbles into a wrong foul act himself, it is with the same feeling of remorse and shame which a sensitive musician would feel, if he suddenly and carelessly should strike a discord on his instrument, and should hasten to adjust the chord. So David, in his peniten-

tial singing and psalms, is full of remorse. Oh, sad is the sight of that nature which sins without being conscious of any break in the melody of character! It is like the bungling performance which is all unconscious that it is murdering the music which it attempts to perform, by its continual false touches, and does not detect any of them. There is not much hope that such a pupil, who has himself no sense of harmony, will detect his mistakes. And so, there is not much hope for the man who sins without remorse; but there is every hope for the man of remorse, who is thrown into distress by his own sudden discords. He has the harmonious soul. He has a good conscience, one in which the connection between self and right asserts itself, and is a real thing. It is time for us to be much alarmed, when we find ourselves doing evil without shame, doing what we confess to be wrong, without correcting it, keeping away from the church and cross of Christ when we know that we owe them our service; for then we are losing the harmony of conscience; we are satisfied to perform discords, and pass over them easily. We are losing all power to make melody in our

hearts to the Lord, losing all that harmony of nature, which alone can learn the new song of the redeemed.

Oh, think of it brethren. Never stifle remorse; never be able to go on easily after a sin, if you would not kill the musical sensitiveness and power of the soul.

We have thus seen how each virtue is a harmony of the soul, under the influence of the Spirit's air; and how the conscience is a great harmony. Let us take one more thought before we close, which will illustrate the same fact, that rightness, or holiness, is all inner melody. We have thought about virtues, and about conscience. Now take the the word *religion;* a word higher than either of the others, for it ought to include the others. What does it mean? It means a rebinding together, a reconnection of God and man; the harmony of God and man, heaven and earth; the combination of God's will and man's will; the working together, and coöperation of a man with his God.

Ah, brethren, that is the great concord; the concord which belongs to the peaceful religious life of a man, who feels himself one with

God, and knows that God abideth in and with him. Long, long centuries, man labored to accomplish, to write out, and perform that great melody in his heart; to strike the two notes of God's will and man's will, heaven and earth together, in the soul, but could not. Human life was a discord that saw not how to right itself till Christ, the great Mediator, came and died on His cross, and sounded the great, sweet middle note of Forgiveness; which blended those two other tones of God and man, and made it possible for them to come together. He made Peace, harmony, by the blood of His cross. And the rich chord of Christianity, — God and man united through Christ, — has been sounding ever since through heaven and earth, and through each Christian believer's soul, "making melody in the heart unto the Lord."

Oh, brethren, to-day look at the Gospel and story of Christ once more. It is the only restorer of harmony to creation, and to our hearts. It makes us God's, and God ours. It binds every thought and will of man and every thought and will of God closely together in the human heart. It redeems us, and makes

us able to sing the new song which they alone can learn who have been redeemed from the earth. Oh, let us learn now, and here, the great harmony of Christ's religion. Learn the simple gospel plainly and purely; that Christ our Lord has died for us, and reconciled us to God; has taken away the discord of sin which separated us from our Father and is the Prince of Peace for us; will fill our hearts with the song and melody of religious peace and forgiveness, which will also awaken and stimulate the harmony of Conscience, and the harmony of Virtue. Learn, first, the harmony that the Gospel brings, and then will follow in its train, the melody of a good conscience and the melody of virtue.

Such has been our theme this morning; that a right and godly life is a musical life; that it alone shall be able to sing God's music, and the new song. If there were time, I should be glad to stop to notice the evident practical teaching from it, with regard to the musical worship of God's sanctuary, and its service. That only a soul in religious, conscientious, virtuous harmony with God can sing and utter itself worthily

to His ears, only the redeemed can learn the melody of His worship; that the description of their education and practice should be St. Paul's, "singing, and making melody in the heart to the Lord."

Or, again, our thought would teach us the great error of believing that any and every soul, unharmonious as it may be, shall be received into the Kingdom of Heaven. No, only the inner harmony can speak the outer harmony of the new song. Only one who has developed the concords of religion, conscience, and virtue in the soul, can learn and utter God's heavenly words and melody; only the redeemed in nature.

But let us simply close, by urging upon one another to strive after this inner music of a pure religious life. Its beginning will be difficult, full of discords and tears and remorse and repentance. But daily will the nature grow more sensitive to God's harmony. Daily will it become more capable of adding new combinations and complications of rich, virtuous melody. Daily will its execution be more supple and easy. Daily will it be more able to adapt its harmony to all the varying

keys of life's circumstances. Till it is at last able to learn the new song, which the redeemed shall sing before the Throne; yes, sing without shame in the very presence of God Himself.

HELP FROM MEMORY.

"And He went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there He abode. And many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on Him there." — ST. JOHN x. 40–42.

THAT little word *again* in the first sentence is really one of the main words in this passage, and makes the act and fact which the passage states very faithfully significant. At the end of His earthly ministry Christ goes back again for the first and only time to the place of its beginning. Let your imaginations work upon that fact for a few moments. Within clear sight of His own death and in clear remembrance of John's death — He goes back to the scene of that first public meeting of Himself and John, both in the young vigor of human life. From the midst of His perse-

cutions He escapes and goes back again to the bright memories of the voice of the Father. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and the descent of the Holy Spirit. From the long work of teaching and healing and saving, He goes back to the place sacred to the hour of his consecration to His work, when the earnest Messianic enthusiasm stirred Him, and the first gathering of disciples was felt, and the first offering of human homage was received. From a time when He saw He was to stand alone in the struggle with Sin and Death, He goes back to that early day when John, the brave messenger, stood in his wild attire by His side, and all the people crowded around Him in expectancy of the coming Messiah. Humanly there must have been about that spot in the wilderness beyond Jordan the vivid, fresh memories which belong to all beginnings, when the cause carries an atmosphere of hope and enthusiasm, and raises high its banner, before it steps with it into the thick of the struggle.

How we look back to such moments with supremest affection. How some peculiar lit-

tle belonging or incident of theirs comes to us with an infinite tenderness. Some man's voice or friendship that then was ours, and is ours no longer, some strain of song or some word of cheer which is an essential part of that early bright scene, now whispers itself to the ear of our memory with a mixture of strangeness and familiarity which is saddening. It is ours and yet not ours. Some hope or resolution of our own of which the substance may yet be left, but, the early atmosphere of whose radiance seems dissipated in the great struggle of realizing it. Do you not all know such sensations who have had any experience of life? Have you not all some pictures hung behind the curtains of memory to which you go back alone and wonder at their color, just as we look at the pictures of the old masters; and yet more — wonder if that color was really yours? The Apostles recalled the Master's companionship. The Early Church thought of the Apostles' presence. And so always in all connections secular or religious, in all ages Apostolic or modern, in the Bible or in your life, comes out this great human habit of going back

again to an earlier association, of reviving the memory of the brighter younger scene, of retreading the old ground. It is in your life in America and in Christ's life in Judea. It is one of the human likenesses of Nature between you and Him, by which His Divine strength comes to us. It is a fact in our Lord's life, this visit again to the place where John at first baptized, which will make that deserted place beyond Jordan fruitful with strong lessons.

Let me do my best to draw these lessons out. I will put the first in this form. Christ goes back at the moment before His death to the bright happy memory and scene of His consecration. As He goes bravely on, He goes affectionately back for a moment. And it attests not simply His affection, but His faithfulness to that memory. It was not a mere sentiment that carried Him back there. It was not to say "How much better were those days than these" — or, "How different a prospect lies before me now than then." You cannot conceive of Christ having such thoughts. At least He never expressed anything like them. And why not? First, because of His perfect faithfulness, I think.

What makes the memory and the place sacred to the memory ever sad and unbearable is our unfaithfulness to its bright spirit and promise, our feeling that we live now on different principles and in a different way. Then the old vows and the old hopes and the old eagernesses are reproaches; and their brightness and glory cast long sad shadows over us from the walls which our changed lives have built between them and us. But let a faithful man go back to that memory, and, just so far as he is faithful, the place is dearly pleasant to him. His voice may have lost his tunefulness but his heart has not lost the strain. His sword may have lost its first gay brightness, but it is the same sword which he then drew with his first enthusiasm. Companions may have scattered, but the bond of common truth between them is all the stronger for these many faithful years.

Now think of Christ going back to the spot of His baptism and there abiding. The approving voice of the Father, "This is my well beloved Son" has been twice repeated since it came first to Him there. He goes back thither saying, "I have done always the

works of my Father — therefore doth my Father love me." He goes back without the consciousness or reproach of any faithlessness to the bright day of consecration when the Jordan waters sparkled as John baptized Him. Do you think as He looked at those rapid waters again, as He found the spot where heaven opened above Him, that any remorseful regret came to Him, or that He felt that anything essential had been lost out of His life which he had in those earlier days? Nay, as His faithfulness recalled the memory of the faithful John true to death, has not the later life made doubly dear the strong bond of the earlier association? And now, still purely faithful to the happy consecration hour, He enjoys returning thither that He may renew its spirit of consecration before His great effort at the Cross. He is in perfect accord with the spirit of the place, and the spirit of the place and its holy memories of God, the Father and Spirit, and of John the true Herald, come directly and fully to His human nature and strengthen it for its Divine work. It is a place of refreshing, not of mourning; a place of renewal, not of de-

spondency; a place not only to which He goes back, but from which He goes forward. It is the place of a new beginning.

But there is another reason why the place was not sentimentally sad to Christ. In that place which had been of old full of the multitude that flocked in turbulent life about John, in which He had Himself stood, see, another multitude comes! Many crowd and resort unto *Him* as He goes back to abide there. Again the old desert places that wondered why men should come to them, have a fresh wonder of the same sort. Again the stormy Jordan sees a stormy human life. Again the still solitudes listen to human voices, and behold that greatest of sights, a man teaching and men learning the truth. How the new multitude filled the place of the old one! How new life was poured into the vessel that had been emptied of its old life three years before! Do you not see what I mean by this, my friends? I mean this: that Christ carried a new current of strong life into that place which was sacred with the memories of the old life and the old strength, and so He took away all the mere despondency and sen-

timentality which belongs to the memory of past days and of departed vigor. Was the old memory of John and his multitudes grand? Yes, but see, here is its grander result, another multitude which comes to believe as that first one only came to repent; which comes to the King as the first came to His messenger! Here are the real results of that first grand gathering. And now the life of the Past is not sad, but glad to Christ, because the life of the Present flows into it, and joins it in its own place with its own later and fuller strength. How the people felt it too! "John did no miracle, but all things which John spake of this man were true; and many believed on Him there."

And do we not know the same thing? The memories of Venice and Rome and Athens are sad, because no new and modern strength, resulting from the old, fills the streets and palaces of the old nobility with vigor. But the memories of London and of Germany and of America are invigorating, because a new strong resultant life is flowing ever into the channels of the older remembered life. Other battles are fought in the

same fields. Other men teach from the same desks and pulpits which the old masters held. Other active generations work nobly where elder men built bravely before them. The heroism of the war against rebellion is shown on the fields of honor and of independence. There is no sadness, for one life is the greater result of other and earlier lives. There is no degeneracy, but consequent later life in the very same place.

Now I wish to apply all this. I have been showing you how Christ could go back to the place in which John first baptized; why He returned again to the scene of His consecration just before His death; why He wished to see again the place of that first beginning of His public mission. There are two reasons: First, because He was so divinely true and faithful to his consecration that to see its place again would not sadden him but reinspirit him for the last great trial of the Cross, and, as it were, rebaptize Him in the presence and unity of the Father and the Spirit; and, secondly, because He carried into it a new strong present resulting life, which, as it were, lifted the

old memories among its banners and carried them as its heritages and rights.

Now, my friends, our best life needs this same sort of thing, — a power to return and to reinspirit itself, and a place and time to return to with our present life. As we go on, we need to be able also to go back in this healthy way. I speak to a great many for whom God has provided just such a place of renewal. I know personally the stories of the baptism or confirmation of many of you, and I know the warm, earnest consecration to the Master's service which characterized the act, and which the act was only valuable as representing. I know that it was genuine and soberly honest. And others whose memories of consecration reach back beyond my time here, or even beyond my life, I find all through your number. And also many and many another who tells over to me that same story of a remembered consecration in some place or another, in some form or another. Sometimes I hear it from a mouth which surprises me; sometimes I meet it in homes and stores and connections where I least expected it. But there are everywhere

these memories of consecration in your consciousness and mine. And here are our lives this morning, yours and mine, looking into the future, which includes for us the Cross as it did for Christ; which runs down to a death just as surely for us as it did for Christ.

My friends, as we thus stand together this morning with our great consecrations behind us, and our crosses and deaths before us, I beseech you all to go back again and renew and reinspirit yourselves. If you would prevent them from being sad memories, merely saddening records in the future, of strength that is gone, be faithful to them; test yourselves with the old baptismal consecration: "Do I still endeavor not to follow, not to be led by the desire of anything that is ungodly and selfish?" "Do I still believe in the simple faith that Christ draws me into God's love." "Do I still purpose with God's help to obey His will and commandments?" Oh, do not be satisfied unless the questions still win assent; perhaps not in the same young high tone, but just as genuinely and honestly as of old. The brightness of that

new Christian armor may have been soiled by many a battle and contact with evil; but if it is still faithfully worn, if it be not rusty, it matters not whether it is bright or dull, whether your voice is young or old, enthusiastic or very sober. If by any faithfulness, if by any answering response, you connect yourself with that early consecration, you will gather new strength for the future of trial from it.

But, oh, more than this; not only faithfulness in some form or degree or tone, in order that those memories be not sad; but you must take back into the memories some real rich later life that to-day is working in your soul. Shall you go back to that old life and say, "There is no new increase to put into it or with it?" As well might you think that a river could roll on truly to the sea and not broaden and deepen every mile as it goes! You must be able to say, "Yes, I remember feeling an earnest love for my Lord in those days, but I have a maturer sense of His presence in the temptation and trial that I endured yesterday and to-day. One is the result of the other; very different, perhaps, but it makes the memory

of my first life happier to add some distinctive life of to-day to it." Oh, will your heart be a Venice, full of museums and memories of old nobleness only, or shall it not be like a brave metropolis, which, under the shadow of its monuments of glory, does its own high deeds of to-day, and from its ancient halls utters to-day's finer words? Whenever you return to think of your consecration be sure you carry something of to-day's new life with you; and then out of that combination of Past and Present shall flow forth yet a still nobler Future for your soul's career. Oh, my friends, are we doing that, as we go on always to a new Advent and Christmas, and Lent and Easter?

But I know there are others among you who can and will say, "All this does not touch me. I have no such consecration memories for you to appeal to in this way and on these grounds. All the more I speak to you. Can you go on into the Future, whither, following Christ, we *all* go? Can you go with no place of renewal behind you, with no memories of a consecration, no such spot in which life gets reinspirited, and seems a great brave

whole thing, where the present life of to-day joins that of the sacred Past, and both go on with double strength into the Future? Can you do without that which Christ valued and used? Oh, my friends, I dread to think of a life with no such memories! I dread to think of it in conflict, looking back to no time of arming and drilling! I dread to think of it in death, with nothing behind it to give it comfort or strength! I dread to think of it in a world beyond, whose happiness is only to be won here first. No memories to be faithful to, and none to which to add your present life's contribution! A life with no background! A life with no foundation! A life with no standing place! A life with no principle! May God help you, and at once, if that describes your life this morning. May He make you seek His consecration and His service. Let *this* be the spot and the time which shall be the strong renewing memories for all the rest of time and eternity. Do not say for another day or even hour, "I have no such baptism memories for you to appeal to, and for me to return to," when the love of God is always waiting to bless you with them.

THE GOLDEN RULE.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets." — ST. MATTHEW vii. 12.

SOME men enter the world only to complicate it and its histories and its affairs, to add each one more to the numberless variety of lives and interests which already distract and weary men. Others, exceptional men, are born, as it were, to simplify and disentangle the world's history and interests, not to add only a single life more to the world, distracted with the multiformity and conflict of life, but to bring that in their life which gives the secret principle of other lives and histories, that which combines, and unites, and reconciles, and concentrates them in spite of all their diversity. There is a divine power about such lives which serves to simplify life. They represent God, the

principle of all life. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God," and such reconciling men are the true peacemakers.

But this divine power of simplifying life is seen at its best and purest in the Son of God, in the life of Christ our Lord. His life, from Bethlehem to Calvary, was not simply another added to the sum of human woe and struggle, before and after it, but His was the solution of the problem of life. His words were not a few mere utterances, added to the vast noise of human voices, which rise and swell in different tones, and in different causes, and in sad, unintelligible discord, all through the years of time. But His was the one still small voice which simplified and gave the secret of other utterances. His system was not merely another, added to the systems of thought or truth, which come and go, succeeding and superseding each other, and distracting men with their varying claims. It was the one simplifying truth of all, never to be superseded.

This is the view which our text gives us

of Christ. Think of what it says: "This is the Law and the Prophets." The Law and the Prophets; think what a long, crowded diverse human history those two words cover. The Law and the Prophets divide all previous human history between them at the time Christ speaks. All the strivings of the human heart and life they represent. The Law is that which revealed God's will to man through his conscience; the will of the God who created him, to agree with which was his perfection and happiness; to agree with which, man struggled and agonized in many a land of God's creation. The Prophets are the great figures which come after the Law, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel, and a host of messengers, who come, not to bring laws, but to bring hope to a race who have found themselves unable to live by that law. They come to say that a helper, a cleanser, a redeemer cometh who shall give man that ability. Many were these voices of hope, which spoke to man who had sinned, year after year, against the Law. The Law and the Prophets: the voice of commandment and the voice of hope; these two express

all human life before Christ. All the long human histories of despair and hopefulness; all the many new efforts, and failures, and renewals; all the change and succession of time; all was included under those two great names, the Law and the Prophets; the failure of man to be righteous, and the hope of a Saviour, to bring him the power to become so. And yet, Christ says, "All this extended life of man, I sum it all up, I solve it, I simplify it by the message I bring, by one little utterance: '*This* is the Law and the Prophets.'" It must have sounded strangely to the Jews, to whom He spoke, as they heard that all their Law, so various and particular in its requirements, and covering so many years of sacred history; and all their Prophets, with their long succession of eloquent lives, their many burdens, their many visions and portraitures of the future; that all this, all their history on which they dwelt so fondly, which was the life-study of their learned, the pride of their patriots, and the veneration of even the humblest citizen, — was, by this new preacher, summed up in the single breath of a single

sentence. All that long struggle to obey the Law, all that long hope for help to do so, can one simple maxim give the secret of the whole? Ah, brethren, so it is. Christ stands up before the world as its simplifier. Bewildered with its attempts and its wishes, it is Christ's gracious office to say to it, "Here is the Law and the Prophets." "I do not bring a new attempt, and wish to distract you further. I bring you the secret principle of all attempts and wishes." Do we not need this, my friends, — some one voice which shall simplify for us all the anxious conflicting voices of life; some one history which shall solve the mass of practical human history and its problems, which are all around us; some one teaching, which shall realize the good and truth of all teachings? That is what Christ is for us. The one central figure introduced to bring unity; whom if one sees and hears and follows, life is no longer a bewilderment, but is ordered and simplified.

"*This* is the Law and the Prophets." What then is this which is such a quick summary and solution of the previous elements of life?

They are very plain words. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." No words could be more easily intelligible, less abstruse, less involved. Let me try to show, in some one or two ways, the preëminent value of this rule of life; and then, how it fulfills man's two great voices, the Law and the Prophets. And first, in these intensely simple words, so simple that at first we see nothing in them, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," is given to us a rule for life which we carry with us and within us. We are to draw the standard of life out of the very innermost treasury of our nature. What we want, what we would men should do to us, — who does not know how deep that is? It touches our most inner secret of self, our ideals of life, our hidden picture of perfect, complete living. Such things we do not, we cannot tell wholly or easily, to our most intimate and sympathetic friends. Below all utterance, or expression to another, is what we wish for ourselves, what our nature is craving. It is the inner chamber of life, where the soul has hung its

great picture of life, and into which it retires alone to admire, and long, before that painting which it has made. The youth, with his great longing expectation of the world; the man, yet unsatisfied with his gains; both are continually telling over to themselves what they would men should do unto them. It is the foundation of all hopeful life. It is the sediment, it is all that remains of a disappointed life. In all cases, it is the most inner, continual, personal thing of life. No man is without it. And it is this, this innermost secret of our being, that is to be the guide of our action to others. It is not something extraneous. It is not anything outside of ourselves; not events; not others' wishes for themselves; not that which philosophers have taught us is man's good; not what others have done to men or to ourselves. We are to adopt no rule from the outside. It is what self wishes for self. This makes the rule of life very personal. It makes life itself in its motives very personal. It enlists our self. This is the first preëminent value of the Golden Rule.

My friends, what is it that makes fashion-

able life so sickening to a real man, and so tiresome to a hearty, sincere man? It is because its rule of conduct is an outside rule of life. It is what society has established as the etiquette of manners, and of relations, and of appearance. We are doing to others what an arbitrary outside authority has told us to do. The standard does not come from one's self. And what makes a worldly, business life so distasteful, with its hardnesses and falsenesses, to a real man, but the same thing? The guide of life is only the common custom of the business community, its code of relations. We are governed from the outside. The exchange sets us our law of life. And the real self does not act and govern. It is Quixotic to do to others in business anything more than the bare code of the street deems honorable. So then, first, Christ's rule is preëminent, inasmuch as it requires our deepest nature to be the guide of action. It identifies us at once with whatever we do. It makes us real and sincere. Let a man follow this law of Christ, and he is no more ashamed to be natural in society or kindly in business. The man does not

become a mere puppet, drawn hither and thither by the arbitrary strings of etiquette or of business necessity. Christianity asks the heart, the inner self.

But, secondly, this law of Christ is pre-eminent in taking pride out of our active life. Do to others what you wish for yourselves from men. Under such a law one never acts towards others without feeling how he also rests upon others, how he looks with longing toward others. What he does for others is not something that he has no need of for himself, but, all the while that he acts, he is feeling his own want and dependence. He values what he does, because he wants it himself. His very action toward others is the reminder to himself of how he longs for others' action toward him, of how he depends upon others. The hand that strives to give, is one that has desired to receive. There is no superiority, no pride possible under such a rule of life. We are not to say with the speech of superiority, "I do not need myself what I am doing for you." Action toward others is not to exalt our pride in such a way as that. But

we are to say, "You are but a representative to me of myself and my longings. I humble myself as I help you." This takes all the pride out of goodness and kindness and activity; and pride is their worst foe. This makes the best comforter out of the man who has suffered the most deeply and who longs for comfort himself. This destroys all the air of condescension in any human intercourse. You are only doing what you also wish for yourself. There is no pride about Christian benefaction. It is only the utterance of one's own neediness.

But I must go on quickly to still another of the preëminent values of this comprehensive rule of life. Thirdly, and principally, it is the only principle of human *progress*. You are to do unto others whatsoever you would that men should do unto you; not what men have done unto you, but what you would that they should do; your own ideal of life. You are to do it. You are to make it actual. That is progress, and that alone. You are not only to do what has been done, but more than that, what you wish should be done. Not simply to re-

produce what has been given to your life, but to work on a plan not yet realized, which is simply what you wish for yourself. Ah, brethren, there is no one of us, I fear, whose wishes do not run beyond his actual receipts. And the great temptation for us always is, to do precisely as we are done by; to make our receipts, instead of our wishes, our measure. Nay, but then all possibility of progress is gone out of the world's future. Do as you would be done by. Take your highest ideal and picture of life, however unsatisfied it may be. Take it as the standard of what you are to aim at for others. Is not that what all discoverers, all men who have improved and widened life, have done? They have not enjoyed what they have wished; no, but they have striven that others may do so. What has been only a hoped-for picture to their own lives, shall be a practical reality for the life of others, they say. Is not this Christ's life, who asked in vain for others, and then gave Himself? And is not this the secret spring of all loftiness of character? Is not that the very height of Christianity and nobleness which can say, "My life has

been darkened; I have known little of good, and kindness, and brightness, and love. I have received little that I would, but I will do good for others. I will work on a plan, and for an object, which has not been realized in my own case. Out of my pains, I shall be glad if peace and ease can come to others; out of my darkness, brightness. I shall be glad if men reach a better lot than my actual one. I will strive to bring to them what has only been a wish to me. I cling to the belief in life and love, although I have myself experienced so little of them. If my own ideal has been disappointed in my own life, I will try to make it an actual thing in another's life." "Do what you would have done to yourself;" not "Do what you have had done to yourself." "Do as you would be done by;" not "Do as you have been done by," is thus the motto of the purest unselfishness and nobleness. It is the inspiration, the motive thought of the sufferer, who tries to save other lives from a like suffering, and to give them peace. It is the description of the many crushed lives, who have devoted themselves to the

happiness and care of men; striving to realize their ideal on earth, if not in their own history, then in some other man's history. It is the expression of that Christlike character, which, after being deceived, ill-treated, or foiled at any point, yet is not soured, does not visit the same upon others, and perpetuate the transmission of evil, but says, "I will do what I wish had been done, not what really has been done. I will break the transmission of evil." Yes, these simple words are the descriptive precept of one who sees in time a great series of ascending steps, and burns to witness the progress of others beyond his own actual standing-place, and says, "They shall not reproduce merely my history and experience. They shall be the very highest which I have wished to be." Ah, my friends, this is the Gospel's mode of realizing one's wishes, one's cherished ideal of life. Men will not do it for you. No, but do you do it for another. Do not let that glorious plan never take shape in life, but make it a real, living piece of architecture in the world. Do not let it die with you, but have the glad consciousness that what you would has really been

done. If it cannot be erected on your own ground, put it up before your eyes in the ground of another, and it will reward you. Sad, sad, when a man dies and has not made it possible for a better life than his own, to be lived. Oh, sometimes this maxim which we call the Golden Rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," seems to have a touch or a sound of selfishness about it. But viewed as we have now looked at it, it is the very mainspring of nobleness; the highest expression of unselfishness. It does not say, "Do unto others because you would have men do so to you;" but, "Do as you would have them do unto you." Learn that your wishes for life are perhaps not given you for yourself directly. They are the sealed orders, given you by the Master, seen by no one, known by no one, acted upon by no one, which you are to act upon dutifully yourself toward others. Oh, never say, "My wishes in life have been disappointed." They will never be real till you have tried to realize and do them for others. Remember Christ longing for rest, for a

place to lay his head; and yet never receiving it from men, but leaving peace and rest for them. Remember Christ, who only received death, and yet gave life. Remember the Cross of Christ, who asked in vain for honor from man, and received shame; yet gave honor, and gifts, and rewards to man. His wishes he worked out in others' lives.

But now, says Christ, this is the summary of the Law and the Prophets; this Divine maxim whose values we have been analyzing. How? First, it is the Law. No matter how many different moral commandments of duty the law of right contains, this one comprises and fulfills them all. For one who sees his neighbor's life as the fair ground which God has spread before him in which to realize his completest idea of life will not wrong that life, will treat it as tenderly and carefully as his own. The law will not be broken by reckless, disappointed men, who, in a fit of chagrin for their own overthrown wishes, will lay waste the lives of others in murder, and intemperance, and lustfulness. And a new value is given to life when man comes to realize

that the same rule governs all; that what he wishes for himself is also the standard for others. It is a glimpse of the universal interdependence of man on which Law itself rests. And he who sees that, has become a man of Law at once. To love one's neighbor as one's self, is the universal human standard of life, on which hangs all the Law and the Prophets. Yes, it fulfills all the brightest dreams, and visions, and hopes of the Prophets, even to the coming of Christ. To reproduce in another's life what is the highest wish of our own, the unfulfilled conception which we have, is a process which keeps the world in spiritual progress, which brings us daily nearer and nearer the radiant glorious life to which Prophecy points; brings us nearer and nearer to the perfect Kingdom of Christ, which Prophets, from Isaiah downward, have seen and desired in such various moods and strains, on which their hopeful eyes and inspired minds have dwelt. That Kingdom of Christ is the top of the mountain, up to which the world climbs, by doing to others more than men have done to us; by doing to others whatsoever

our inner heart would that they should do to us. That is the precept which fulfills both the Law and the Prophets, — on which hang all the Law and the Prophets.

The Law and the Prophets! Still those two voices speak to man; the Law guiding his present steps; the Prophets showing him the future glory and perfection; the kingdom of God and Christ. Duty toward the present; longing, and expectation, and hope toward the future. But they speak in vain, and we hear in vain; still the future and the past are empty and elude us; we cannot fill or hold them unless Christ gives us the rule which fulfills them both; which makes us tread the present more conscientiously, and truly, and lawfully; which brings us nearer the great future of Prophecy. Christ, Christ, brethren, gives you the great principle which solves the questions of this world and the next; the great principle which fulfills Duty and Hope. Oh, would you be a man passing through the world of Duty into the other world of Hope; fulfilling both Law and Prophecy; you must be led by Christ and

His Gospel principles. I beseech you, fulfill the Law of the present life, and the prophecies of the coming life, in trust upon Christ, and in continual learning of Him.

THE EPIPHANY OF CHRIST'S CHILDHOOD.

"And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" — ST. LUKE ii. 49.

WE have the facts of Jesus's childhood put before us this morning. All that there is known of His Divine Childhood is given us here; His flight into Egypt, and return to Nazareth when Herod sought Him, and His journey to Jerusalem at twelve years of age, when childhood was passing into boyhood, and life was crossing the line of human thoughtfulness and the sense of duty. All this is read to us on this first Sunday after the Epiphany. The veil is drawn aside at each epoch of the Lord's life, and we get two quick, vivid glances: first, as He begins his infancy; secondly, as he begins His boyhood, or early manhood. All the rest is blank. It is as if the Gospel wished to say, "One incident will

describe each era and part of your Lord's life. It was so consistent, that one glance at one bit of it reveals the whole, and shows its character, its motives, and aims." This story of Jesus at Jerusalem is the manifestation of God in Christ in His childhood. It is the first manifestation of His life on Earth; the first Epiphany of His conscious life; the Epiphany of childhood. And so this is the subject for this first Sunday of the Epiphany season, which bids us think of the different forms of God's appearance, or manifestation in Christ, the first of which is God in the childhood of Christ. Christ is thoroughly a child; thoroughly a youth; thoroughly a man. In every stage of life He is a representative of human life at that stage. He is not an unnatural child, or boy; but He shows His Divine nature in the natural ways and forms of childhood. His humanity is perfect; it is not marvellously or strangely precocious. We may draw all the usual features of human child-life out of this little story of Jesus at Jerusalem.

Take first the active delight in a new experience, which so belongs to all children.

Manhood loses it. Many disappointments take away the glory and delight of the first experience; and the man comes to say there is no pleasure in it. But this is Christ's first sight of the world, outside of His humble home at Nazareth; His first mingling with a great city, and its crowd and tumult. He sees for the first time the great temple in which afterwards He sat so often. And He is sensitively and zestfully full of it. With childish fearlessness and inquisitiveness, He penetrates the temple, enters the very inner circle of the doctors, and unhesitatingly questions them. He is alive to all the surroundings of His country's capital and centre. He does not go up and down, to and from Jerusalem and the feast, in a dull, unaffected way. He breaks away from the company of kinsfolk and acquaintances. He is a complete, live child; a perfect representative of the activity and restlessness of the human inexperience. Everything is a marvel to a child. He questions about everything. He has pleasure in everything. As Jesus grew, it was with a thorough, open-eyed appreciation of the surroundings of His life. His parents did not

allow for this. They had become so used to His childish trust and reliance and satisfaction, that they disregarded this other feature of childhood's life. They expected Him to be among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. They felt aggrieved when they found that He had wandered in His boyish delight and appreciation of Jeursalem and its new wonders. They did not understand how this quiet, obedient, thoughtful child could so have left them; and they asked in reproach, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" It is a very instructive little incident. Christ becomes the champion of childhood. It is Christ indicating the natural features of childhood, such as its inquisitiveness; insisting that they must be met and gratified. He shows that through them God was manifested in His life; that they are not wrong in themselves; that they may be channels of the Holy Spirit's action; that the fault is not the child's, but the parents', if they do not give this youthful, fresh, inquiring activity a field, and superintend it, and care for it, and indulge it; else it will choose and take its own field, and not choose it so rightly as this Divine Jesus did when He was

a child. Delight and liberty are the simple creed of childhood, says the poet. It would save many a young life from future excess; it would keep in the family many a prodigal and wanderer, and early emigrant, if this feature of a true, full child were at once recognized; if parents would not only look for a child's trust and obedience, but also for his activity; if they would themselves furnish the healthful sphere for it; if they would sympathize with it as Wordsworth pictures a father doing in one of his poems: —

> "These blooming boys whose hearts are almost sick,
> With present triumph, will be sure to find
> A field before them freshened with the dew
> Of other expectations; in which course
> Their happy year spins round."

But take another feature of Christ's vindication and championship of the nature of complete human childhood; another flash of this bright, divine Epiphany of childhood, — its impulsive truthfulness to self. Childhood does not ever argue sophistically, contrary to the impulses of its nature, as a man delights to do often. A man will put himself outside of himself, and contradict himself and

his instincts with logic; as if he were some one else than himself. But a child knows nothing of all this process. He acts, just according to his nature, in perfect truthfulness to it. He says, "I must do this;" or, "That is what I like to do." He does not think of results. Your arguments do not ever wholly overthrow his longing and instincts. His trust and obedience, indeed, will often lead him to set his wish aside. But argument of itself is as nothing compared with that truthfulness to his own natural desires. So this Divine Child, this manifestation of God through human childhood, has the same trait. He asks in surprise, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" "How could I help going into my Father's temple and talking of Him and speaking for Him? It is the great impulse, and duty, and mission of my life. And I but obeyed it. Did you not know I would be here? How could you expect anything else?" Here is the child nature, truthful to itself, which is full of a Divine impulse. It says, "I must do this. I must be about my Father's business. I was full of a long-

ing to do this, and I did it. I did not think of results. I did not think of your sorrowing." In the Christ it was a divine, holy longing which the child-nature obeyed intuitively; but it obeyed it just as the poor, weak, depraved child obeys its longing to be in the filth of the street. Christ shows that same childlike neglect of all mere argument. The same bold daring and truthfulness with which a child says, "I must do this or that." It makes a child independent of fear, of custom, of logic, even of command. We call it too often, and too harshly, willfulness. But it does have a better side. It is truthfulness to self, such as manhood often refines away and loses. Make a better, purer self in the child, if possible; one which shall have only high and holy impulses to obey, like the spiritual child Christ. Give it a better self to be true to, but do not try to destroy in any way its impulsive truthfulness. Mary recognized at once the force of Christ's child-like answer, and she replied nothing, but kept all these things in her heart. Here was a child's holy "I must." Other children may stamp their feet and say, "I must." This child

says, with a holy, calm independence, "I must;" "not even a parent can carry me contrary to myself." Here was a perfect, holy nature, saying in its childhood, "I must," and there was nothing more to be said in answer.

This simple force and earnestness of childhood which Christ used is a very free and valuable power. It is not to be thrown away or repressed. The child grows into a less intuitive age.

> "Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy."
>
> "Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
> And custom lie upon thee with a weight."

It is a force which Christ has sanctified; through which God has manifested Himself in His Epiphany. It has its work to do in our development of godly character. God stands ready to let His Spirit use it, to make by means of it a new Epiphany of childhood in each little one. Enshrine Christ at the heart; a dear love of the Father, at the child's centre of life; make his self Christ-like, and then, his little positive "I musts" will be holy. They will be the first mould-

ing, sanctifying power of his life. They will leave effects which will remain always, even in the less free days of manhood.

But take another characteristic which Christ shares with all childhood, and glorifies for childhood, — its filialness, its sense of Fatherhood, and of a family. A child is not able to think of himself apart from a family. The life is fresh, and has an affectionate remembrance of its author. The life is dependent, and has a reliant reverence for its stronger parent. The life has a sense of some one at work before its life began, and above it in position, under whose plans it is to work, and to whom its obedience and duty are due. A child orphan is an unnatural sight; and we hasten by adoption to supply it with the necessary accessories of child-life, — a home, and guardianship, and authority.

So Christ says in his first recorded manifestation of his Divine nature, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" I am the complete child; no one is so filled with the sense of the Father's presence, and its necessity, as I. All the filial caresses, all the childish trustfulness, all the child's def-

erence to another's hand who assigns its duty, and under whose plans it works, — all this I represent. I am never an orphan, and I never can be. I shall always say, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." My last words shall be, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." I am full of the sense of Home. "In my Father's house are many mansions." It is Divinity using this feature of childhood in its first shining, its first Epiphany; exalting, sanctifying the natural instinct of a trustfulness; God shining through the natural ideas of childhood. "How is it that ye sought me? Ye who knew my filialness, my affectionate submission and dutifulness in the earthly Jewish home of Nazareth; did ye not know that I must be as filial and dutiful to my truer Father, here in his temple at Jerusalem? Did you think a child's duty is over with his earthly relationship? No, God uses that dutiful sense of Fatherhood in a higher relation; shines through it; manifests Himself through it in my life. The Divine nature uses this universal trait of childhood for its own exhibition of the relationship of spiritual life."

Christ thus turns the mild rebuke upon his parents. "Do not think that my sense of sonship ends with your home. It must also be exercised toward God in His home." How many parents, and persons of influence, need this same rebuke and teaching. We require and cultivate a child's dutifulness, in his earthly home. We foster it by love. We draw its bands more closely every day; but we too often do not seem to think that same characteristic of child-life has a still further field of exercise, a religious field. You who are so proud of your affectionate child: Wist ye not he must also, just as well, be about the Father's business? Not only a moral, dutiful son of man, but a religious, reverent son of God? And so, in many ways, all men make the same mistake which these parents made. They will not let God use the same nature and its good characteristics which they will let man use and cultivate. They will be loving toward men, grateful for human favors, courteous in society, gracious to all. But they stop with the earthly relationships. They do not think of using their same love in a higher way. They ought to be grateful

to Christ for His great favor of the Cross, loving to God for His great mercy of Christ's salvation. Let the moral man carry his principles into a higher sphere and he must become religious also. You cannot sever between morality and religion in that way. Christ shows us, "If I am filial in Nazareth to you, I must also, by the same principle, be filial to God." "If I am devoted to your will, and trustful, I must also be devoted to my Divine Father's will." But we stop short. We say, "I must be honest to man, give him his dues, but not necessarily, therefore, to God, and give Him myself and my honor. I will respect the wishes, and customs, and laws of my community, but not of God and His kingdom." I will keep the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," but think nothing of the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Religion is but a higher application of the principles of morality; the doing for God what you do for man; being filled with the sense of God's fatherhood as with that of earthly parentage; carrying dutifulness from the home of one to the higher

home of the other. I remember going through a cave of stalactite roof, hung with glistening pendants, and capable of wonderful reflections, but shut away from all sunlight and gleam of Heaven's power. A simple torch won marvellous effects from those waiting walls. But it was a great longing all the while in one's mind, — Oh for one stream of daylight through all this sleeping glory! If earth, made light, will so lighten it, what would the light of Heaven do? So one looks with regret on much of the sweetness of life; upon a filial son; upon a life whose earthly affection lights it up with gleams of bright beauty, but with none of Heaven's light streaming through its filial devotion, to give it the supreme glory of a life of a son of God, delighting in being about the Father's business; flinging over it the light which you see in Christ, in this Epiphany of His childhood. If filialness is so beautiful lighted by earth's relationship, what would it be, if the sense of God's relationship shone through it? Let us each ask ourselves, my friends.

Such are some of the ways in which God was manifested through the human child-

nature of Christ. I have not talked of the Epiphany of childhood this morning for the mere sake of sentiment about children, but for the sake of some very valuable practical lessons which we may all take from it. The subject throws, first, a new value on Christ; and secondly, a new value on life, in all its parts. First, a new value upon Christ. He saves and sanctifies all life. He puts His Divinity into every section of life. He is not like Adam, a life without a childhood. He is not like one of earth's conquerors or saviors; one who does his deeds by the strength of his manly arm, or the wisdom of his native brain. No, but his childhood is a part of the great work of the world's sanctification. His childhood helped to save us. He shows Himself, while perfectly Divine, yet using a child's nature in all its main native forms and features. He is thoroughly a human child. His Divinity destroys nothing of childhood. And so He works always. The new spiritual life which comes from Him does not destroy any essential feature of human life. They are all in Christ's boyhood as plainly and strongly as in any human boyhood in our homes.

And so of every part of life. Be sure of it, brethren, Christian life, spiritual life, destroys nothing human. It redeems, reëmploys it. The love of society and humanity, which becomes pride, dissipation, frivolity, drunkenness, in earthly use in so many of our homes and stores, — a spiritual life makes to minister to the growth of humility, benevolence, carefulness of one's example. Does Christ make you lose anything of life in becoming Christian? No, He simply replaces the old, false mode of using what you have, by a new and better one. This is the value of Christianity. It does not try to change the phases of life. So it shows that it comes from the God from whom life came. It respects all the forms of life. It keeps the boy the boy; the man the man; the woman and the child, all in their places. Other reforms do not. Philosophers try to mature the youth before his time. Social and political reforms try to make men and women all after a pattern. Here, one false religion insists upon making all its followers soldiers; or another, scholars. It has no use for any other character of life. But Christ preserves

and guards all the variety of life. He saves all. He sanctifies all in their own places. He causes God to shine equally through every stage of human development.

But now, secondly, this view of Christ as a Divine child throws a new value on life. Life must be wholly a manifestation of God. Every age is of value. Each section of life brings its own contribution to the perfected Christian character. Childhood has its own forces, its own kinds of strength and power, which other parts of life do not furnish; and they must be used in developing the man of God. You lose something if you put off religion to your later years. Your religious character never feels the benefit and power of these child forces, which do not belong to later life. You know the value of an overture in music; how its simplicity helps all the remainder of the more elaborate variations and movements. You could not start at once into the midst of the symphony, or oratorio, and intelligently enjoy and use it. So youth brings its own peculiar contribution to the harmony of godly, Christly living. That is the teaching of the boyhood of

Christ. As the day without its dewy morning and all its influences; as the day beginning with hot noon; so is a life which begins for God at late years. We disjoint our religious lives; do not see that "The child is the father of the man," and that all our days must be bound each to each by natural piety. Christ puts them all together again, shows God in and through all of them, even in and through boyhood; and says, "It is not merely that you may be God's at the end; it is that all from the beginning may be His; and that at the end you may have a product towards which every stage of living has assisted. Oh, may Christ, the truest human child that has ever lived, win all the freshness and young strength there is yet in us for His Father!

But are there any who have passed beyond all the fresh youthfulness of life, who call this discouraging to their endeavors? Nay, God is condescending to such who have so delayed. He tells us that in a certain sense we may become as little children by intercourse and union with Christ. Some of the child-force may come back to us through a simple faith in Him. A new, hopeful

freshness and activity, somewhat like a boy's, may dawn again on one who is born again and begins a new life. A new, strange existence is before him, and he feels the old zest of youth return, as he thinks what that existence has to show him. A new truthfulness to his better self, a simple following of God's spiritual impulses without being bound by hard logic merely, comes again to him, and he says, "I must be God's," with all childhood's fervor. A new sense of sonship breaks upon him who has outgrown earthly sonships, and he cries, "Abba, Father," even in old age looking up to the eternal God, whose years outdate His as Eternity outdates Time. Yes, the Epiphany of childhood may, even in a certain measure, return to such a repentant one. Oh, may God, for Christ's sake, and through Christ's spirit of a new life, bless us all with the title of children of God; renew our lives with the fresh, eternal childhood of the sons of God.

THE EPIPHANY OF CHRIST'S OPENING WORK.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him." — St. John ii. 11.

A WEEK ago I took as my subject the Epiphany of childhood, or the manifestation of God in the natural Humanity of Christ's Childhood. The services of the first Epiphany Sunday put that subject before us. To-day I ask you to look at the next step in the development of Christ's human life; the Epiphany of His early manhood; God in the initiation of His work. Our services give us on this second Epiphany Sunday, first, the appearance of Christ and His proclamation by John; secondly, His first manifestation to individuals and the calling of disciples; thirdly, this first manifestation to the world, His first miracle, and exhibition of His

power. To-day brings before us the beginnings of His life-work. It shows us how God appeared in these beginnings of active, independent life. We shall see that Christ's life began like any human life, beginning its work in the same gradual way, in the same successive steps; and yet, in each of those steps, there was an Epiphany of God. In each Deity appeared.

He experienced the same necessity of a gradual beginning, the same difficulties which make steps of progress requisite, which we all know and feel. He did not burst in full Divine power upon every one's sight at once; but He represented humanity in its slow commencement of action. My friends, we all have passed through this trial of a beginning, the struggle to make a new presence felt in the vast throng of men which crowd the world's activities; to win recognition in the jostle of those who are anxiously beckoning for attention; to gain a foothold on the edge of life where one's head may be seen and distinguished, and one's work may be known and followed. Many a heart sickens in the long struggle, and the old hope of eminence dies

out, and over and over the beginning is attempted; at each effort, alas! more feebly; till the initiative power of life is gone. The world's satisfaction with its present self, the prejudice against new-comers, the resistance of evil against reform, the conservatism which scowls at a new system or style of work, our being unknown ourselves, the odium of the falseness and failure of other previous candidates, — these all tell against a beginner in life. And he is apt to clutch at any means, no matter what they are, in the great strain to make the first impression, and to gain the first impetus and recognition. He is apt to say that afterwards, when he has won place and security, he will be more scrupulous as to the means to be used, more religious, more spiritual, more godly. In this whirl of a start in life, he believes it cannot be so. He must be very earthly, unscrupulous; anything to get started, and afterward he will be more careful. But to-day, the lesson is a very great and practical one; God's Epiphany in the beginnings of work. Christ's work was the most opposed to history and to the surrounding world that

has been ever attempted, the strangest, the surest to be resisted. And its beginning was a thoroughly human beginning; that of a man among men. But God was in it, using and shining through all its steps of gradual human progress. Each one was a manifestation of God, an Epiphany. Oh, remember this figure of Christ in its young humanity, striving for the beginning of His life, doing nothing in which God did not shine, and so winning for His work of Redemption a lasting recognition and efficiency. Remember it when the temptation comes to you, "Oh, anything, if I could but gain my start. I will be pure and godly afterward, and use my position for God, only let me once win it in some way. I may have to be hard, cruel, false, selfish in my covetous desire to begin life now; but I will be generous and true when I am secure and successful." That thought comes to all aspirants at some time, and the best and highest figure with which to shame it is Christ, at these His beginnings, manifesting God, letting God's glory shine in all the steps of His early manhood.

But follow the human steps of this manifestation of God in Christ's commencing work. First the exhibition is only to John the Baptist. When Christ appears first at Jordan, to begin, it is not before a multitude, or to a chosen number; it is to a single man that He is manifested. John says, "I knew Him not, but that He might be made manifest to Israel I am come baptizing; and I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." To one man first He approves Himself. He only manifests Himself and His credentials to the Baptist. That is His initiatory step. And is not that very human, my friends? Does it not bring the human nature of this Divine Saviour very close to us, to see His career thus begin? He and all His capabilities are known but to one. There is only one man to point to Him and say, "He is the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world." Take the most highly successful career you can find in those among you, and let it go back along the thread of memory to its very beginning, and it will stop at that same early figure, of the one man who first alone rec-

ognized and appreciated the worth and future of the life. What self-made man is there, with his present hosts of friends and followers, who does not date back affectionately to the time when his hopes and plans and capabilities were known to, and encouraged by some one discerning friend, with whose recognition life began, and woke into hope and activity? While the rest of the world thought nothing and noted nothing and guessed at nothing, this one enlightened interested one, in warm believing devotedness, would prophesy, in loving appreciation, the work and the office and the career of his future. He is the first proclaimer, the first to whom the man is manifested. Friends and believers and followers may multiply in after days; but still, the one who first saw you, and proclaimed you, is remembered with peculiar affection, as Christ spoke of John Baptist when He grew older. Now this same human feature of a beginning life is in Christ's history. He, the Divine Saviour, is manifested first to only one. He receives the recognition and proclamation of but one. His divine work begins just as a

work of ours would do. He is thoroughly a representative man in His divine career; not an exceptional man; not a king whose place and duty and future each and all know from the very day of birth; but one of the common ranks of men who has his station to win; representing the universal common life of man, and its natural course of development. I like to think of Christ, sanctifying this stage in human life by passing through it, and manifesting God through it. For there are very many who have to pass through and wait in this vestibule of a career. Young men and women, whose faithfulness is for long months only known to some one employer in whose presence they toil out their apprenticeship. Sons, daughters, husbands, brothers, sisters, encouraged to go on in the weak days of early inexperienced struggle and of obscurity, by some solitary true heart by their side, who knows them and their real power and place, notwithstanding their inexperience and misfortune and obscurity; and who whispers their titles to them, and their future work; and the man or woman toils on. Here is Christ manifested in His Divinity at the first only to

John. Remember how the great labor of all time, of saving a world, began. It is a type of all real work. Be not either discouraged or impatient. If the perfect worker persevered through the hour of a single man's recognition for our sake, we may persevere too; we, the imperfect, faulty workers, for whom the discipline is good. God may make this stage in your career longer than in Christ's; but it matters not. You may remind yourself that there was a time when Christ moved among men, moved over the field of His future work, and no one of all received or bowed before Him. To none was He known but to a single man. The secret was between Christ and but one other. Be glad of that one heart; that one place of recognition. It is the warm hearth-place where all future vigor is kindled.

But, immediately a second stage opens before Christ, in His gradual beginning of active life. He gathers disciples; individually; by ones and twos. He goes here, and becomes known to Andrew, and John, and Simon. He goes there, and finds Philip and Nathanael, and individually manifests His great

character to them. He impresses individual followers and adherents, before He goes out into the world, to appear before the mass of men. He does not go directly, from John the Baptist's recognition, to the great field of waiting multitudes. He passes through this intermediate stage of manifestation to individuals. He will not step out into the great strange hostile world unattended and alone. He gathers this little company and retinue, before He goes to His first miracle, the first public exhibition of His power and glory. It is again Divinity using in its appearance the various gradual steps of human advancement, and sanctifying them for us. Before any real labor is performed, there must be a band of personal sympathizers and co-workers; men who believe in Him in advance of His work; who have been won, not like the multitude by a miracle of power, but won by Himself, before they have seen His power. Each one thus privately attached is a strong, hidden foundation-stone for the future building of His more public manifestations. He provides His co-workers, His supporters, first. Oh, it is well to study how humanly Christ's

Divinity thus appeared! We are so ready in our own confident strength, in the glow of our working zeal, to step at once to action, to believe in our independent ability. Nay, no man is to work alone. It is a part of the necessity of human nature to be bound with the companionship of others in the accomplishment of great ends. Christ accepted it for His own work. Divinity used this true human feature of life. He would not go out alone. He bound others to Him by interest in His labor. Even in the saving of a world, the Divine worker is careful to join men with Himself, — admits human cooperation in the carrying of the Cross to men. There is something then very touchingly and significantly human in this choice of disciples before the work. God, acting alone, made the world. "Where wast thou," He asks Job, "when I laid the foundation of the Earth?" But God, in redeeming the world, comes nearer to us; works through a human nature; works in human ways; allows man to be by, to be attached to, and interested in the work, as its supporter, and promulgator, and missionary. This great Gos-

pel labor of Christ is brought as near to our hearts and lives as possible. It uses all the stages of a human process. It unites our hands and God's in a common interest. The Redeemer is nearer to us than the Creator. For Christ, the God-man, was careful not to go alone to His labor. The pain and struggle of the Cross was all to be His; but they should be its watchers, His supporters, its preachers, its agents. Oh how much work in life fails because it scorns this necessary feature of human working which Christ did not scorn to observe. It goes out in its young high strength alone; without company, without personal attachments; shut up in its reserve, in its consciousness of higher aims and higher powers than others. It goes on all unsupported, its solitary figure a thing of wonder to all. But none understand it. It has no point of contact with the world on which it works, and, worn and wearied, with no recuperation possible through others' comprehension and companionship and sympathy, it is very ready to stop misanthropically. Whenever you say, "People do not understand me. I must go on and do it my-

self. I am independent of them. There is none who fully appreciates my works;" a sad mistake is made. It is a mistake which Christ rebuked, when He selected men who, all along, could not understand the Cross and its necessity; but who, nevertheless, followed and supported Him, in personal attachment at the first, without having seen or known His power. Be sympathetic in your work. Recognize the necessity of manifestation to individuals before any large general effects and exhibitions are produced. The slow gathering of this individual influence is the necessary introduction to success. Our Christ is the reproof of pride and impatience in the introduction of the labor of life.

But now, thirdly, after the single proclaimer, and the individual believers, Christ at last appears in a multitude. He manifests his glory in His first miracle at Cana of Galilee. And still the moderation with which this Divine laborer proceeds is very marked. Nobody knows Him and His power, even here at the first miracle, but the servants. The ruler of the feast and the bridegroom He leaves in ignorance of His agency in chang-

ing the water into wine. There is no impatient display in His manifestation. He knows that He is at the beginning of His course. He accepts the necessity of partial effects, for Divinity is using the human stages of progress. We are impatient if all do not recognize our work. We should have gone from that feast dissatisfied with the scanty appreciation, and grieved that our power was not known to all. But Christ sanctified another necessity which belongs to human progressiveness in any work. Effects, influences, are but partial; never universal. We wonder at the slowness of appreciation, the tardiness with which news of ability and power travels. It is part of this inevitable human progressiveness through which God worked and shone in our Lord's beginnings. We complain of Foreign Missions; the scanty number of converts in the first years. We are troubled at partial effects; and quote the bare statistics of the first half century of Asiatic and African Missions; and all the while we are forgetting this great lesson of to-day, that the manifestation of God is through Humanity, and partakes of all the gradualness

of human beginnings. If you would have a Gospel full of human nearness and sympathy to us, — a Christ sanctifying every natural feature of our lives, — you must look to see His Divine work go on and manifest itself under the human characteristics of life; as Jesus Himself entered His work on earth according to the law of human beginnings.

But examine more closely this miracle, this first manifestation of power with which Christ began His labor on earth, and see what else it teaches us of the necessary features of human progress in its initiatory stage. He came to destroy sin and its effects, to release the world from the weight of wickedness and sorrow and death. That was the aim of His mission and of His power. And yet, His first exhibition of power at Cana of Galilee has nothing to do with sorrow or sin. It does not show His power over disease which sin has brought to us. It does not cast out the devils of evil possession. It does not contribute to man's spiritual well-being. It is a miracle over nature. It occurs in a scene of joy. It merely helps a festivity. It reveals nothing of His redemptive power and mission.

It does not advance the work of that mission. It is simply an exercise of His Divine power for his friends' better temporal satisfaction. That is to say, Christ's first step is not so much to state or exhibit His work, as to exhibit His power in an attractive form. It is to draw attention, to make men feel, "Here is a new energy present among us, working for our blessing." After men have seen His power, then in a future manifestation will He go on to tell them more distinctively to what that power is to be applied. There is a great advance in human beginnings, brethren: first, the exhibition of the power; and then, secondly, the exhibition of the mission itself. How often we scorn and wish to omit this grade in progress! The thing asked of us, as we start in our enthusiasm, does not seem to have much to do with fulfilling the great desire with which our eagerness is burning. It will not directly help on our great mission. "Give me something to do which shall bear directly on my end! Do not ask little side duties and works of me." Nay, but first show your power, no matter in what form or where, in what work or position.

Christ might have said, "Shall I, who am burdened with a world's salvation, allow my first outstanding public act to be at a mere social gathering, where my effort will have no direct bearing upon the saving of men?" But His first requisite was to manifest His Divine strength. So is it the first requisite of many a life. Be moderate, be patient. You may not seem to gain much directly on your aim and hope now. These are the days in which you are manifesting simply whatever power you have, whatever faithfulness and truth and application you possess. That manifestation comes first. And especially is this so in religious duty and work. You devotedly wish to be a workman for and with God; to bring His kingdom, it may be; and for many days He gives you nothing to do which distinctly aims at it. You have only temporal, social, domestic tasks assigned you. Yes, but that is a great stage in the work's progress. First, manifest your spiritual power and energy in that sphere, whatever it is, and God in good time will give you the direct work. Show the power of humble godliness in the restraint of impatience and pas-

sion; the power of purity in the check of mere sensual excitement; the power of love in the daily courtesies and benefits of temporal intercourse. First, the manifestation of Divine energy, it matters not when or how. And then will men begin to feel, as at Cana of Galilee, "Ah, ah, we cannot even in our social temporal life do without this new Divine power. It makes the best entertainment after all." So said the governor of the feast at the wedding of Cana of Galilee. So will men say always; if like Christ you will be willing, patiently, even in lesser ways, at first to use the power of God; even if it do not seem thus to be accomplishing anything yet toward the conversion of the world.

Thus, my friends, I have endeavored to show how the opening of our Lord's heavenly mission included all the slowness and disappointments which attend a human beginning in life; the slowness of gathering supporters; the slowness of partial effects; the slowness in the manifestation of His direct, definite work. These things, which fret our impatience, are the very windows through which the glory of His Divinity finds oppor-

tunity to stream forth. They are the scattered clouds, grouping themselves about the rising sun of life, endeavoring to hide it; but yet only making its radiance and glory the more apparent. They only give occasion for new displays of its brilliant colors and effects. God maketh those very clouds His chariots, to help him climb onward, upward to the zenith.

PROPHETS AND APOSTLES.

AN ORDINATION SERMON.

"He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." — ACTS x. 42, 43.

THESE are the closing words of one of St. Peter's sermons. It is not a very high-sounding peroration. It is not made of very impressive sentences. And yet they are very effective and impressive, these first sermons of the Christian Church, these first utterances of the Christian consciousness in its new spiritual vigor. The wonderful effect of these first simple sermons seem to me to bring out the value and necessity of the fundamental truths, which they so barely and so plainly state, as if relying on no strength or effectiveness but that of the truth. One of those truths I wish to

put before you and enforce this morning, appropriately to our solemn service. I have taken the two verses in which the Apostles put themselves by the side and in the company of the Prophets. They couple their witness of Christ with that of the Prophets, as they so often do in the New Testament. It seems almost an instinctive feature in the Apostolic oratory. Paul stands before Agrippa and in pleading for himself he says, "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which Moses and the Prophets did say should come." And then, after Festus had interrupted him, bursts out the great Apostolic question, "King Agrippa, believest thou the Prophets?" So as he speaks on his missionary tours in Asia Minor, and as he preaches in Rome, you will find the same companionship eagerly and fully claimed with the Prophets.

Now let us take the full signification of this. I do not need to remind you that the Prophets were not the Priesthood of the Old Testament; that behind these Prophets and their eloquence there was a vast and continuous organism of religion in the orders and

successions and services of a priesthood, the very skeleton of the Jews' religious life. The Priest was the typical figure of the Jewish religion. His person and his life was the very core of the religion which God gave them. He in fact was the religion itself. He was the essential thing of the elder religion, the only thing God gave them, the human symbol of Christ's Priesthood. Let that go and all was gone. They had nothing else. Their only religious fact was a human symbol. This remained, down to the Apostles' very time, the religion of the men around them. But the Apostles never claimed any connection or affinity with these priests, whose compact, well-linked body suggested and was to the Jew his religion. Paul and Peter never thought of saying, "Apostles and Priests;" never conceived of themselves as another link of their chain, but joined themselves to the other religious Jewish figure — the Prophet, a minister of God of no set tribe, as irregular as the Priests were regular, as broken in their succession as the Priests were unbroken, as single as the Priests were many, as startling as the Priest was monotonous. And what was

this essential difference which made the Priest and Prophet such diverse persons, and made the Apostles claim affinity and connection with the latter rather than the former? It was simply and only, my brethren, this one difference, that the Prophet was the utterer of God's message through the Holy Spirit, while the other, as Priest, was human and human only, a mere flesh and blood life used by God to represent something divine. There was no inspiration belonging to them, they had nothing to utter; they were formal; they could be blinded and deceived; they never stimulated the nation anew; they exerted no corrective or reviving power; they could and did sin in every way, and misled the nation. Isaiah gives you a dismal picture of how the Priest headed the people in drunkenness and covetousness, and led them down to their ruin. They were not direct powers from God; they were not direct voices of God's Spirit. There was all the difference between the Priest and Prophet that there is between a man whose human nature and life God uses perfunctorily without at all affecting his humanity, and a man into whose

humanity something divine has entered. One in himself is only human. The other is also uttering God. As a bit of paper-money may represent a value, but is itself only paper, and not gold or silver, and its material may be debased, while any coin which the real metal enters and controls has a direct and unchanging value. Or as the sculptor puts his idea into marble or any lower material, but wishes that he could change the material itself and put himself into it, and make it warm with his own higher life. Who does not feel the difference between Aaron and Moses? One uninspired material of God, and the other inspired material; one with the hand of God on him, and the other with the Spirit of God in him and speaking through him? Who does not appreciate how much greater Samuel was than Eli? or how much greater Samuel was as a Prophet than as a Priest? He was personally in contact with God and His revelations, and exerted God's power to rebuke and revive, which Eli did not. Who does not feel how the Prophets break in on the human routine of the Priests with the direct and recuperative influence of God Him-

self? Who cannot appreciate how John Baptist towered above the Priests in the wilderness; and how the Pharisees could not answer the question of Jesus, "Was the baptism of John from heaven?" Who does not sympathize with the great longing which filled the Jewish heart, when our Lord appeared, and they whispered in hope and cried in joy, "Oh it is as one of the Prophets! A great prophet has risen up amongst us! Among us who have never seen anything but Priests, who long for God's direct Word." Yes, I think we can all feel how this direct word and message is the power men honor and value and desire. Directness has the same value in other things beside religion. I remember going out of the English Parliament Halls, so full of the signs of rank and orders and an organized constitution and its processes, and turning suddenly into a lofty gallery, St. Stephen's Hall, into which were gathered the finest statues of the ten or twelve men who had directly moved England by their eloquent wisdom. It was the tribute to direct independent power in the hall of organized legislation, and in the nation of rank

and strict conservatism, a tribute which men must pay. And the direct truth, the Holy Spirit, the very genius of the Word of God, claims a higher tribute and appeals to a deeper longing yet. To speak the Word of God through the Spirit, that was the Prophet's characteristic. That made him the rebuking, steadfast, hopeful, recuperative power of the nation. That was something of God in history, caught from God who uttered the first prophecy in the garden of Eden. God thus used the Prophet from within. He used the Priest from without.

Now in a moment the quick Christian consciousness of the Lord's Apostles felt and claimed affinity with the line of Prophets rather than with the line of Priests. They were the men of the Old Testament, of whom these were results. You say, how different they were! Had those simple Apostles any of the dazzling visions of Daniel and Ezekiel? Do they reach the deep tragedy and agony of Jeremiah? Do they even attempt the high poetry and wide outlook of Isaiah? Will their calm, simple, happy statements mark them as the brother witnesses of these impassioned,

agonized denunciators, seers of visions? Yes, yes, not only as their brother-witnesses, but as the superior witnesses, the higher in the great companionship. What binds them together is that they both speak a Divine word by the Spirit, both bear witness to a Christ: "that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." They both equally speak directly of God, express the Divine truth, have a direct Divine word and power. The day of human representation of God is over. There are no more Priests. The direct speakers of God's Word are the only ministers. The Prophets have ended in the Apostles, both speaking the Word of God, but how differently! One in the agony of prophecy, the other in the calmness of sure possession; one in the dim poetry of vision, the other in the quiet diction of sight and description; one in the sorrow of visible punishment, the other in the happiness of visible redemption; one filled with the view of the sin that raises the cross, the other filled with the view of the cross that hides the sin; one with the Spirit of God passing through him, possessing him and using him, and the other with

the Spirit of God dwelling in him, speaking in every word and act, in graces as well as gifts; but both speaking the Divine word of God, both witnessing for Christ, whether as a hope or as a fact, whether as a promise or as a possession, whether Isaiah or John, Jeremiah or Paul, Ezekiel or Peter. Consider the current and see how it widens out. How little looks the temporary Priesthood when it disappears, as the word of the Prophet opens into the larger word of the Apostle,— gone like the last shadow as the day-star introduces the sun and the full, clear, radiant day of Christ! How they have disappeared from the mind of the Church with her consciousness of Divine possession and no necessity of more human representations! The Epistle to the Hebrews mentions it only to dispose of it forever. The other epistles never mention it. The Christian Apostle is full of what he calls the "ministry of the Word." He is eager for it. He is impatient of anything that keeps him from uttering the great Divine fact of redemption. He must preach Christ and Him crucified, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel!" Preach; Preach;

Preach, is his continual exhortation. You must preach and I must preach, he cries. His primary thought is the spreading of the Word of God. All else is but a means to that end. That is the Divine trust of the ministry: "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel." Over and over again he repeats, "Whereunto I was ordained a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles." Everything in life is measured and done "according to the precious Gospel of the blessed Lord which is committed to my trust." His one great prayer is, "that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel." His great ambition is to be an "able minister of the New Testament." His one consciousness is, "God has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." "His one effort is to transmit it truly, "not as the word of man but as it is in truth the Word of God." That is the Divine element of his ministry. He is in charge of a fact from God, the reconciliation of men. You can find nothing but this, the sense of being charged with a Divine message. And so with a full, quick instinct of Divine relationship, the Apostles join hands

with the Prophets, who spoke a Divine hope as they speak a Divine fact; who with them were the voices of God, not human figures of the true like the Priesthood, but the truth itself in absolutely and divinely true words. Do you not see and feel the large idea of the Apostles' ministry — the continuous truth of God in the world; the continuous reality running through all falseness and all mere representation; the continual Word of God enduring forever; the constant succession of the Divine in the midst of the human, and they a part of the great succession, their "according to my Gospel" growing directly on to the prophetic "Thus saith the Lord?" How it runs in an unvarying continuity through everything else! Shifting nations, dynasties, rites, and priesthoods have changed and changed again, but this Divine element of human life, the Word of God, remaineth forever.

There is a full, eager stream which rushes to-day with its old impetus through an ancient abbey-ruin whose masonry had all the strength of earth and man in its structure; but that running stream which had the cohesion of God's creativeness in it alone sur-

vives, running through the ruined monastery's refectories and cloisters with no loss of its Divine power. So let us remember, always, the Priesthood was but a temporary structure built of human composition, human elements, for a Divine purpose, which, once fulfilled, passed away; but the constant stream of God's own Divine elements of life remains and flows on, a full Divine succession. I should be frequently and completely depressed if I could not hear and believe a constant direct voice of God's truth in the world, and could not throw myself into its current of influence. There is hope in all change and perplexity while that remains. It is the welling stream of life from the throne of God. Oh, believe in it, my friends; constantly go back over it, and constantly go forward upon it. Rely upon it as the Divine thread in the composition of human history. Rejoice that in all human weakness and error and difference, the Holy Spirit has kept it alive, has spoken directly here and there and everywhere, and be confident that while it is alive the future is secure, that in the eternity of the Word of God is the hope and the security of man.

Now as I speak to you this morning, with this main fact of human history in your mind and mine, as it was in St. Peter's when he preached, I wish to apply it in some ways which will help us in our understanding of to-day's service of consecration to the Divine ministry of the Word.

St. Peter, claiming affinity in sermon and epistles with the Prophets, as witnesses of the Word of God, as the ministry of the Word, and not with the Priesthood, gives us a clear view of the nature of the Christian orders of ministry in our churches. I find in a recognized and much-read book of our Church an argument of this sort and in these words: "The first argument, then, which we would advance is the analogy to be drawn from the nature of the ministry of the Jewish Church. We find that in the Jewish Church God Himself instituted a Priesthood consisting of three orders, the High Priest, the ordinary Priests, and the Levites. These through all ages were the only authorized teachers of the nation, the only ones permitted to offer sacrifice in behalf of the people. Should we not then naturally expect that, when the Christian min-

istry took the place of this Priesthood, it would be, like everything else, conformed in some degree to the ancient model? Such would be our reasonable supposition, and we find it realized. In the early Church, as its condition is learned both from Scripture and history, we recognize everywhere the traces of a threefold ministry, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." I confess I do not know a more dangerous argument than this. Putting aside the false statement that the Priests were the only teachers of the Jewish Church, we surely are not to expect that the Christian ministry should take the form of a Jewish priesthood which was shaped and ordered for an especial purpose, the representation of sacrifice, which has forever passed away. The Apostles never for a moment connected themselves with the temporary Jewish priesthood of sacrifice. They only claimed a ministry of the Word. And just as soon as you claim that the Christian ministry is a succession of the Jewish priesthood, all the sacrificial offices of the Jewish orders come with them into the Christian ministry. No, the three orders of our ministry have no Jewish ancestry. We have three

orders, and they had them, indeed, but it is a mere likeness of number; there is no real identity of duty, or office, or name between them. One was a ministry to represent a sacrifice, the other is a ministry to proclaim a sacrifice, to minister not a human representation but a Divine word and fact. And its Apostolic heads are careful never to connect themselves with Jewish priests. They would have rejected any such argument for the constitution of their ministry. Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons can have no ancestry in High Priest, Priests, and Levites, for the essential work and office which shaped the Priesthood has ceased. Men have written Presbyter Priest, and made a nominal likeness, and often assumed a real likeness, and men have let their minds run on vestments and rites with all the carefulness of a Levitical age in which they were the essentials of worship. If three other orders again appear in the Christian ministry, another idea and necessity has given them birth, and they owe their source to it and not to the priesthood of types.

Oh, my brethren of the clergy and laity, forever let us cut loose, with Apostolic radi-

calism, from the idea of a Priesthood! The great Priest and sacrifice has come, and our ministry is simply to announce Him. How can we say that our Bishops are the successors of the High Priest, when we have an High Priest in the heavens? How can we say that we have the old arrangement of men whose orders gave them different sacrifices to offer, when the One Sacrifice which they represent has forever been offered? How can we claim descent from a representative Priesthood, without endangering our character as the ministry of a direct Word of God, as co-witnesses with the Prophets? Never let us allow that, if we would avoid returning to the early days when religion of necessity was based on a symbol, and not as now on an accomplished reality, — the work of Christ whom we simply preach.

And this therefore brings me to the Christian ministry and its orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. Why are they and what are they? Whether we think that they were arranged by Christ, or were an outgrowth of Apostolic emergencies and wisdom, — and remember there is nothing in the New Testa-

ment to decide that question, and a question left open cannot be an essential one; whether we think the one or the other, — recollect always it is a ministry of the Word, whose shape comes from the necessity of spreading the Word and carrying it to every creature. The Apostles are organized, as the Prophets were not, because they are to go out over all the world, and effort must be systematized that the Word in all its quietness, power, and application may reach every man and every man's need, while the Prophets had but to preach to a single nation already organized. And so we see the Apostolic shape of ministry appearing. First, the necessity of the new population of Grecians brings out the Deacons, or attendants of tables. Then the Apostles ordain Elders to carry to newer places the same Word, who must have their heads for the purposes of further evangelizing, and Timothy and Titus appear leading and directing them. Everywhere it is a ministry shaped for the preaching of the direct, Divine Word. The necessity of evangelizing, not the duty of the Priesthood, shaped the Christian ministry. So value your Christian ministry and its orders,

my friends. It is the shape that the carrying of the Word has demanded. It is that men may go to every man with God's Word. It is that the voice of God may go through the world. And so it is to "preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus our Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." The Priest had of necessity to point to himself, for he was the human representation which constituted religion. But the Christian ministry and Church never preaches itself. It does not constitute the religion. It is deadening when it exalts itself and preaches the Church. It is to preach the Word, to preach Christ, to bring Christ to men. It is the executive organism to carry the Word. That is its only Divine claim, its only essential Divinity. If it do not preach the Word, it is no true ministry no matter what its form.

And now I turn willingly to a final and closer application to you, my friends, who are to enter the ministry of the Spirit and of the Word, this succession of God's announced truth, this grand companionship of Apostles and Prophets. How will you fulfill these places and offices which you enter? How but by filling

yourself with the Spirit of the Word of God and the knowledge of Christ? Strive to be able to say the Apostolic words, "I desire to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." "He that commanded light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And then when that is learnt, rely on nothing but the Word of God. Be not afraid of your errors or ignorance, if you feel that message is plainly going out of your lips, through every act, by every influence. Enter no plan or work which does not aim to spread the knowledge of the Divine Word. Do not be absorbed in questions of Church politics, which are all secondary to the Word we minister. Be sure you never can outgrow the Word. Preach it calmly, as a sure founded fact that nothing will overthrow. Rejoice with great inner joy when you find yourself before any number of people with a chance to speak it. Let your growth of all sorts send its contribution into application of the Word to yourselves and ability to announce it to more men and to more needs and in more ways. Study

men for their sake and the Word's sake. Be humble in any true success because the cause is that of God's Word. Be ready to bear adversity, hardship, and self-sacrifice, for it is your one duty to announce the cross without thought of circumstances and persons and results. Remember that it is very easy and natural to assume priestly if you have not spiritual power. Do not assume to be the Church any more than the laity, and all who believe the Word and are the body of Christ. And be not men-pleasers and time-servers, for ye serve the Lord Christ and only proclaim Him. Suffer all things rather than hinder the Gospel of Christ. Go any distance to say the Word to any human creature. Use every glory and sweetness of life and of the world, their light and shadow, their vanity and change as channels for the Word's influence. Strive to build up men in the holy faith as well as to bring them to it. And as quietly, day after day, you carry the Word, as Saturday after Saturday you think and write out the truth of Christ, as Sunday after Sunday you scatter it, as through every Christian year you tell Christ's life; be happy in the great com-

panionship of God's direct witnesses, claim a place in the band of Apostles and Prophets. And then, as you have had a part in the sowing of the Word shall you have a part in the joy of its harvest, and shall appear with Christ and all His holy angels, when the work and necessity of the Word's ministers shall be merged in its everlasting teaching and the communion of the Holy City on the foundations of whose walls are the names of the twelve Apostles of our Lord. To Him be glory and dominion forever, Amen.

A GOOD-FRIDAY SERMON.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." — GALATIANS vi. 14.

GOOD FRIDAY is the day of mournful anniversary to us; the day which sin has stained deepest; the day on which death is most prominent; the day on which even the sun at its height was shadowed and darkened. And some such influence it still has, and has rightly, over us at its annual recurrence, as the anniversary which brings the thought of sin and death more especially before our minds. I would not keep either thought out of our minds to-day, and yet I wish to transfer to our minds the tone of Paul's mind, as he wrote, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul says, and believes that the event of to-day is the one event of glory, the one event in which he

glories and rejoices. The glory of the Cross is the theme which fills his thoughts, the one glory from which all other brightnesses are but a reflected gleam to his eyes. He glories in nothing but the Cross. And is he not right? This sad anniversary of the Crucifixion, is it not the glorifier of all other anniversaries? Christmas, with all its sweet happy celebration of a quiet birth; would it have any real brightness for us except as it was the birth of the conqueror of Sin and Death? And Easter; would the glad sunbeams of its warm light awaken the soul to any new warmth of life, if the Cross did not stand behind the grave; if He who lives had not died; if He who ascended had not first descended; if He who is exalted had not first been humiliated; if He who shows Himself divine had not previously identified Himself with human life even to its death?

The Crucifixion, even in its sadness, is the glory of all else. There would be no light upon any day, but for the day when all light was darkened. It is as when some life among us has been shadowed by a great and deep sorrow, and the once merry and lightsome

friend goes among us quiet and chastened. And yet from that subdued life, a deeper happiness is shed upon others among whom it moves. The sorrowful are consoled by its presence. The sick forget their pains in its love and sympathy and resignation. The quarrelsome are shamed by its peace into the happiness of reconciliation. Complaining stops at sight of its patience. Duty is more content watching its devotion. In all its sadness, it is the brightness of the house or world in which it is placed. And so, preëminently, is Christ among men the Man of Sorrows, and yet the giver of peace and joy. And so is the Crucifixion among events; the event of sorrow, and yet the glorifier of all else. So Paul gazes at it, and to his mind there is no true glory on earth which does not come from it. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." If I cannot find its principles in my happiness, may God forbid that happiness; may it go from me. The Cross, the centre of the light and glory of life. The Lamb, the Light of life. All other glory false, which does not shine from the uplifted Cross of Calvary. Let me try to show how this is, and how it may be for each of us.

I think Paul's second clause gives that in which he finds the glory of the Cross. What makes the Crucifixion a scene, yes, *the* scene of the brightest and only triumph? "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom* the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." You see that he is looking at Christ, not simply as the crucified, but as the crucifier; not as passively enduring, but as actively inflicting crucifixion. "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." And this is the necessary, essential part of the crucifixion. The spirit of the world and of human selfishness conspired to crucify Christ, conspired to overthrow and conquer the strength of Christ. They gathered beneath His cross. They put Him to the final test. They combined all their forces of falsehood and cruelty and self-will in a great effort against Him. He met their complete and conjoined assault. The world's bright extended prospect all assaulted Him, all drew Him back from the Cross. The affections and lusts of the human self, for life and happiness and honor, were all tried in His life and death. Now, suppose their assault

fail, and then at once He has the power over them. Suppose His battle line is so strong that no attack breaks its passive strength; then immediately He actively pursues them in their defeat. He will inflict upon the powers of worldliness and of selfishness that which they could not inflict on Him. Their very failure to destroy Him gives Him a right to destroy them. If their crucifixion of Him is successfully borne, and He becomes their crucifier, He may do to them what they tried but failed to do to Him. In that successful passive endurance Paul sees an active power, and therefore the glory of a conqueror. The crucifixion on Calvary is but the first section of the battle. He who has successfully withstood the crucifixion by the world, and by selfishness, has a right to demand that they shall be subjected to the same test of ignominious suffering unto death. As of old, Daniel having passed safely through the den of lions, saw his enemies subjected to the same test; so one passing divinely through the grave has the claim that his enemies be put to the same trial, and another cross be raised. Christ has conquered death with its pain and ignominy; but how can and will the world

and the human self, his crucifiers, endure it? Ah, Paul knows that they must give way and perish in death! The world, crucify it, inflict death upon it, and it has no rallying power. It cannot put aside the chilly touch of dying. It cannot live through it. The brightness of earth and mere worldly attractions, the cloud of death darkens them forever. It is not like the darkness of the Cross of Christ, which becomes quickly the radiance of an Easter morning. The utterances and maxims and wisdom of worldliness, they cannot survive death. They are not the philosophy of death. They are not like the words of Jesus, which are repeated only with greater force after death's trial has proved their truth and power. The plans and schemes of worldliness, death cuts them short, they are never resumed. The great figure in the tapestry of worldliness is incomplete, and death hopelessly tangles the threads. It is not as in the successful crucifixion of Calvary, where death only completed the great scheme, and it was resumed beyond the grave. Oh, let the power of worldliness, which aimed to crucify the Lord, take His place, and suffer the extreme of death, and it

fails. It is weak and dead forever. It has no resurrection, no quickening power, no power to rally.

And take the other of our Lord's enemies, the power of self and human desires over which He triumphed, saying, "Father, Thy will be done," and watch also if it can meet and stand the death which it tried to inflict upon the Lord. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof," says John the Apostle. Not only the world, but our human desires are powerless to resist the days when pain dulls the sense of pleasure and darkens the life and destroys affection for life, and the lust of it passeth away. Death puts a period to their exercise. They do not rally to a new life of selfish satisfaction. Paul sees all this, and sees that Christ has acquired the power of death over the enemies which could not inflict death upon Him, and cries, therefore, "I will glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I, my selfish desires and affections, are crucified unto or towards the world." He inflicts in His turn death upon them, and they cannot survive it as did He. He has won the right to inflict

death upon them, who has Himself successfully resisted death.

And, my brethren, think how complete is the crucifixion which Christ in His turn inflicts by His power. Paul tells us, it is upon the world and self. "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." They are the two parties to sin. Are they not? No sin but has been simply the external world drawing the inner appetites of the human self to their gratification. And Christ's triumphant Cross turns upon and crucifies both of these assisting elements of sinfulness. It destroys the great, wild, exciting spirit of worldliness, proud, material, gross, self-dependent, cruel, dissipating, with that spirit which worldliness found it impossible to destroy upon Calvary, the spirit of calm, humble, spiritual love and trust in God. The Christian, the lover of the Cross, looks out on the hard, flippant sphere of worldly life, and finds that it is dead, or is dying gradually to him; daily the Crucified One is crucifying it. And then, he looks within on the passions of the inner man, which were of old so apt and eager to get him out into the worldly vortex; and he

finds there too the Christ, who could not be overcome, daily crucifying the old man, the flesh, with its affections and lusts. The world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world. The old material domain of sin, and the old ready appetite, alike, have felt the Cross and its destroying power, and its retaliation. The world tries him, and finds him dead or dying to it. He tries the world, and finds it dead or dying to him. No more does the world find a ready, fleshly appetite. No more does the appetite seek or find material for indulgence. A changed life is a life with a new self and a new world.

Brethren, I wish to impress upon our minds that the Cross crucifies its two enemies, both the world and self, because we often look forward with anxiety into the coming days of our new Christian life, and the two forms of its dangers loom up: an outer tempting world of circumstances, and the inner man of inveterate affections; made for each other, helping each other; and we say, "Oh, they will band together to sustain each other. The first touch of the world upon the street will draw out my hard courteous self. The first

touch of the world of fashion and excitement will play upon my desire for frivolity. The first presentation of the wine-glass will arouse the wild animal passions. But Christ crucifies both. He does not leave one unassailed to encourage and sustain the other against a better, truer life. Both the world to us, and us to the world. The process goes on within and without, on both sides. Together they crucified Christ. Together they shall be crucified. His victory upon Calvary is the pledge of it. He claims the right to put them to the same severe trial which He bore successfully at their hands.

Paul, then, glories in the Cross because it means another crucifixion, a retaliation by Christ upon the worldliness and selfishness of sin. The death of the Cross is a figure to him of the death of the power of earthliness and of his old evil self. Sin's death is likened to a crucifixion. It is very long, and very gradual. It does not expire at once. It loses its power of action, perhaps it cannot do all that it would, but it is not yet dead wholly. Daily the world is farther away, and daily the human will is less earthly and selfish; but

let us remember it is a long, a protracted death, wearying the patient struggle of the man who cries, "Oh, who shall rid me of the body of this death!" And sin's death is called a crucifixion, because it is painful dying. The pain of parting with one's old selfish, gross world. The pain of denying one's own affections and mortifying them. No man ought to underrate either of them. No man ought to expect that he will not feel pain in the death of the sinful elements of his life; that he will pass into holiness easily and smoothly without the pains of shame, of reluctance, of tearing away old habits. It is a crucifixion, the most painful of deaths. But no man need feel discouragement in all the gloominess and weariness and painfulness of the death. It is sure, complete death. For Christ is doing it. He whom their death could not kill. "By *whom*," says Paul, "the world and I are crucified." It is not we who are raising those crosses on that new Calvary of our hearts, and trying to nail the malefactors there, and put them to death. It is Christ, the victor under whose feet all things have been put. We have but to embrace

the more closely that first Cross, and it shall retaliate upon its foes within us.

And then, again, let us always remember that this crucifixion of the world and self, so long and so painful, is that which is the very *glory* of the Cross of Christ. It is the sign of its triumph. It is the Cross inflicting crucifixion upon its own crucifiers. Every struggle by which sin dies, therefore; every hardship and toil by which we mortify the old nature; every sorrow and pain and denial that it causes us, remember, they are the glory of the Cross of Christ. Look upon them as evidences that the Cross has more power over its enemies than they have had over it. Believe that Christ our Lord is gaining the glory of a conqueror, in all our weary, troublous difficulties with sin. Believe that the Cross of Christ is being exalted, by every wound which the spirit of worldliness and self-living receives. Then will you be able to say, "though I suffer, Christ is exalted." Then will you be able to use St. Paul's own words, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me. I count all things but loss, that I may win

Christ." "Let me suffer and die that Christ may live and be glorified in me."

I have been trying thus, my brethren, to connect the story of our Saviour's crucifixion with the death of our sinful natures and surroundings. One means the other. The latter is the necessary and practical result of the former. Each one of us may say, "The crucifixion should be repeated in my life. It is not simply an event nineteen hundred years old, done in Judea; but it is a victory, the fruits of which are the crucifixion of its enemies, wherever they are to be found in any human heart and life." Oh, I think we cannot realize the deep story of the Crucifixion, which has been read so often to us this week, more faithfully and profoundly than by laying it alongside of our own spiritual experience, and asking if for every wound and sorrow of which it tells, there is a corresponding wound inflicted upon the sin of our lives. It will bring the Cross very close to us to say with Paul, "By it the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." For all that suffering for me, sin is now suffering in its turn. Then will the Cross be bearing its best fruits.

Then will the Cross shine with its true triumphant glory. Then will your life be one of those bright proofs to which Christ the Crucified will point and say, "My death was a victory. It has been the death of Death. I have been the spoiler of Death and the Grave, for I have taken away its sting, Sin, from this life and this nature."

I bring to you, therefore, upon this anniversary the two saddest things of human history: Christ's struggle with sin; our struggle with sin; and ask you to take from them the thought of glory. The Cross no longer means shame, as it did when Christ ascended it. It means triumphant glory. You may sing "Gloria in Excelsis" beneath it, as well as over the Nativity of Bethlehem, or at the streaming brightness of the broken grave. Glory in nothing save the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Glory in the peace which it brought and which it gives. Glory in the clear light which it sheds upon the eyes of duty, hitherto blinded by selfishness and worldliness. Glory in the defeat of the only formidable foes of life. Glory in the consolation and hope it gives in human sorrow and

death. Glory in the strength its victory gives to the soldier of Christ. Glory in the great promise, that the brow which has been marked with His Cross, shall hereafter surely wear His Crown of Triumph.

Ask ye what great thing I know,
That delights and stirs me so?
What the high reward I win?
Whose the Name I glory I in?
Jesus Christ, the Crucified!

What is Faith's foundation strong?
What awakes my lips to song?
He who bore my sinful load,
Purchased for me peace with God, —
Jesus Christ, the Crucified.

Who is He that makes me wise,
To discern where duty lies?
Who is He that makes me true,
Duty, when discerned, to do?
Jesus Christ, the Crucified.

Who defeats my fiercest foes?
Who consoles my saddest woes?
Who revives my fainting heart,
Healing all its hidden smart?
Jesus Christ, the Crucified.

Who is life in life to me?
Who is death of death to me?

Who will place me on His right,
With the countless hosts of light?
Jesus Christ, the Crucified.

This is that great thing I know,
This delights and stirs me so;
Faith in Him who died to save,
Him who triumphed o'er the grave, —
Jesus Christ, the Crucified.

And now unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him and to His Cross be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

THE DISCIPLE'S WORK GREATER THAN HIS LORD'S.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." — ST. JOHN xiv. 12.

IT is confessedly a strange text. It is one of those verses which are like rocks in an ascending mountain pathway, I think. One who walks wearily or waywardly or blindly will only stumble over them, and be hindered in his ascent. But he who walks guardedly and carefully mounts by very means of their rockiness, and they become to him stepping places to the high end which otherwise it would have been hard, if not impossible, to reach. May this verse be such to us, in our upward pathway, and progress to highest truth; not an obstacle to throw us down or keep us back, but a firm step to help us upward and for-

ward to heights which otherwise we should not attain.

These words, and indeed all the long parting discourses of our Saviour from which they are taken, show our Lord in a very touching and tender attitude towards His weak disciples. He forgets, or rather, He does not mention, for the time being, His own great coming agony and sorrow of the Cross, in the midst of their little lesser affliction of parting with Himself, and being disappointed in His not establishing a Kingdom for them. He comes down to their weakness, and their smaller sorrow, and overlooks His own great travail of soul and body in comforting them; simply saying, over and over, "I go to the Father, and I will send unto you another Comforter, and He shall abide with you forever;" looking over into the bright regions of his heavenly life, and picturing them to His forlorn followers, but saying nothing of the dark trial that is to come to Himself first. You would think He never thought of the fearful sorrow which was hanging over Himself, and whose dark shadow already chilled Him. Yes, even His exaltation, His ascension to the Father,

He only values, seemingly, as it will help these same disciples. A soft rebuke steals in once only, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." But this is all. He does not dwell in selfish triumph on His approaching ascension. He only speaks of it as a comfort to the grieving twelve.

Brethren, there is no one of us who cannot learn from this. Christ had thoughts of profound personal sorrow and joy. Both His death and ascension were before Him. Yet He mentions not the former; He only mentions the latter as it ministers to His disciples' comfort. So I think should we learn to carry our own sorrows and joys about with us. We are selfish in both sorrow and joy. The selfishness of sorrow or trouble is a very great temptation. We gloat in gloomy pride over our own deep affliction and perplexity. No trouble of others seems fit to be put by its side. We wrap ourselves with a sort of satisfaction within it. "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!" None so poor, so weak, so doubtful, so desolate, so sick, so unfortunate as we. Oh, let us strive to enter our affliction as Christ goes to the great agony

of the world; ready to silence our own murmur, and comfort the sorrows of lesser sufferers.

The President, burdened with a nation's care, sorrowful in his great responsibility, yet forgetting or overlooking all in the smaller personal woe of a suffering follower, is a recent figure in our national history. And it is a Christ-like figure. The devoted, saddened sufferer who is bowed under some deep loss or bereavement, and who yet seems to forget all in her absorption in each lesser woe of childhood or poverty, is a common figure, thank God, in our community. And it, too, is a Christ-like figure; the figure of a follower of Him who said no word of the Cross, while He comforted His twelve. And as we avoid the selfishness of sorrow, so let the other, lighter, happier hearts among us, avoid the selfishness of joy. Let us rejoice over our successes, our pleasures, as they minister to others. The greatest sufferer mentioned not His woe, in presence of lesser suffering. The greatest enjoyer, He who looked forward to ascending to His Father, spoke of it only as it helped His human friends. Sorrow and joy,

they may separate us from others. But may they rather, like Christ's sorrow of the Cross, and joy of ascension, only bring us closer to others.

But let us come to the hardness of our text, and its great truth. For it is always a great truth when Christ emphasizes it as He does this, by the introducing words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." Is not this very strange when we take the statement by itself? Greater works than Christ's belong to the believer. Can His human life and works be surpassed in love, in strength, in wisdom, in completeness, in unselfish quietness, in greatness of means, and greatness of ends? Do they lack anything? Are they not full of the divine attributes? Do they not accomplish objects only possible to those divine attributes, the destruction of sin and death, and the redemption of a creation? And, not only strange in itself, but is not this a very contradictory verse when placed by the side of other utterances of this same Christ? "The servant is

not greater than his master." "It is enough for the servant that he be as his master." "Follow me;" not "Go beyond me." How shall this strangeness and inconsistency be removed from these words, so that we can penetrate to their rich meaning? Let me develop the answer by means of a simple illustration. It is a common thought and remark with us, that the child and the day-laborer now use forces and truths, and do works, without esteeming it unusual, which the earlier ages of science and thought, the ages of Copernicus and Columbus, were dimly and laboriously guessing and imagining and hoping. Those early masters laid down theories and principles, and they were ridiculed if not persecuted, misrepresented if not denied, obstructed if not stopped and interdicted. Their work was immense, greater than the work of their successors. It was the massive foundation. But their successors stand on a vantage ground. Slowly those beneficent theories have won acknowledgment. They had enlarged their sphere and field and power of operation. Their activity has increased till nothing now impedes. The noble originators have

mounted into universal recognition. And their children daily develop the power which they made possible; make new applications as new exigencies arise, and new fields open. Their successors and disciples do the same works in one sense, for it is the continuation of the same principle in activity: or, in one sense they do a lesser work, for it is less to continue than to originate. But in another sense they do greater works, for their activity is daily widening, daily less impeded, daily more and more encouraged by more auspicious surroundings. And yet they are not greater than the early originator who cannot show the greater works which come so properly and naturally to them. They follow him. Yet they go beyond him. Nay, stranger still, they go beyond him only because they follow him, and are the disciples of, and the believers in, his first great underlying work. You have probably already in your minds seen how I would apply this inadequate illustration to Christ and His disciples. True, His was the great spiritual all-supporting work. The great problem was finished and enunciated at the Cross. It received its seal at the Easter. And

yet the field of the Lord's activity during His own earthly life was contracted to the smallest limits. He could not go beyond Judæa. His spiritual work found no spiritual surrounding, found no spiritual response, left no spiritual fruit. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." "He could there do no mighty works, because of their unbelief." These were the judgments of His contemporaries upon Him. "Is not this the son of Joseph, the carpenter?" "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils." "As to this fellow we know not from whence he is." "Have any of the high priests believed on him?" "Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." And so He could only lay His hand on a few sick folk, and healed them. Externally that was all His work.

Stop the world after Christ's ascension, and ask it how it had been the better for Christ's living, and it would have nothing to show you. It would konw of nothing done, but a few that were blind, now seeing, a few that were deaf, hearing, a few lepers cleansed, a few in-

animates restored. And a single generation would have removed even these.

Struggling as man in the world of men, bearing sin in the world of sin, Christ laid indeed the massive foundation of a world's redemption; but it was a work wholly wrought out in and by Himself. None other knew of it. It hardly left any outward impression upon men and their lives. And what it did leave was vague, and easily lost. But at the ascension, a change begins. He goes to the Father. He is no more a mere single laborer, working out a great work among men; sufficient to do all, and doing all by Himself; but He has mounted to the seat of His power. And the Spirit of His power goes forth to create outward impressions upon men, to carry His work to others. In the first day of Peter's preaching three thousand are converted; vastly more than Christ ever influenced; greater works than Christ's, because He has gone to the Father. His successors and followers stood on a vantage ground of work. Their great, earlier Master had mounted into universal power. He was no longer compelled simply to suffer and submit as in

the garden; but was omnipresent and omnipotent by His Spirit. And daily His Spirit makes new advances possible for them, which were not possible for Him when dwelling in the flesh. His Spirit spreads and runs abroad. Daily His beneficent scheme and the principles of His redemption win acknowledgment. Daily and yearly the Christian sphere and field enlarges, and new exigencies arise, and new power of operation is given. In one sense, he that believeth does the same work as his early Lord; for he is building the same great Kingdom of God. "As my Father has sent me, even so send I you," He said. They were co-workers with God. In another sense they do greater works than their early Lord. For under His Spirit their field of activity is daily widening; becoming less impeded, and more spiritual. And yet they can of course never be greater than their early Lord, who cannot show the greater works which come naturally to them. They follow Him, but they go beyond Him. Nay, they go beyond His works, only and simply because they follow Him, and believe in Him, and in His great early underlying work. Think of the seed in

the ground. You knew not the great work which folded and coiled away the power of life and germ of growth within it. You see not its little first operation and bursting, and its struggle with the clod. It does no great work then. But when once it breaks the surface, greater works are manifest in the outshoots of that seed, in which really all the work has before and first been done. The fowls of the air lodge in the tree's immense branches. Its fruits sustain, and its leaves cover a multitude of the hungry and exhausted. The visible tree, in one way, does a higher work than the invisible seed. The tree does, in one sense the same work as the seed. It continues the same work of growth which there began. In another sense it does greater works than the seed, with its better and later advantages. And yet, all because it rests in and upon the seed. All because it still strikes downward toward the home of the seed.

Oh, brethren, this is one of those truths which show us at once the two sides of this wonderful Christian life, I think. You may go beyond your Master, it says. Nothing must keep you back. But it is by daily

clinging more to Him as your Master and Saviour. It is just according as you believe in Him. The more you believe in Him and look up to Him, ascended to His Father, so much greater works than His may you do. The more the Christian world and mind narrows upon Christ, the more will they widen in works externally beyond Christ's. This is the wonderful rule of the Christian life, by which a man grows in humility and in glorious breadth of action at the same time. You may have a field of activity beyond Christ's life, if you will lose yourself in Christ. Bound your life by Christ's, as far as the power and principle of work goes. But no life bounds yours; no, not even Christ's, as far as fields of work are concerned. You have new wider duties; new and freer chances; new and better conditions of work. By faith make yourself one in spirit with your ascended Lord; and by that very act you have made it possible to do greater works than Christ. For by that spirit and faith man and Christ live and work together; which was not the case at one single moment of the Saviour's human life. When your human heart is one with

Christ by His Spirit, you are, through that very union, able to give wider field to the activity of that great work which He did at the first. Oh, it is very sweet! Worldly competition says: If you would go beyond your neighbor in business or society, it is by putting yourself above him, by struggling with him, by faith in yourself, by showing your superiority. The Christian competition, says: You may go beyond Christ in your Christian work, by faith in Him, by submitting to Him, by acknowledging Him and His superiority, who has ascended to the Father, and is always giving His Spirit. Once let pride in and sever yourselves from dependence on Christ, and then your power of spiritual activity greater than His is over. John Baptist said of Christ, "He shall increase, but I shall decrease." But Christ says of His successors in the world, "They shall increase because I increase." "He that believeth shall do greater things than I, because I go to the Father." Oh, there is a glorious field of spiritual activity awaiting each of us. Christ says, it is larger than His in the world. And yet without Him, it is all closed to you. He is the door to all the

limitless field beyond. It is by belief in Him, by acknowledging the greatness and truth of His original work upon the cross, that you now may spread that work abroad more widely than He did before He ascended to His Father. Such is the dependent independence of the Christian. There is absolutely no limit to the forms and fruits of His activity. His Saviour says, "You must go beyond Me." But it is all by making Christ his limit, in the Spirit and principles of work; by acknowledging more and more trustfully the value of His first early work, by which He saved the world. Christ opened a splendid prospect and ambition for you, my friends. The world presents nothing like it. But He urges you to it not by flattering your pride and self-confidence; no, but by telling you that it is yours through belief in Him. Again it is Paul's rich truth: "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's!" All things are yours because ye are Christ's, and Christ has ascended to the Father, and Christ is God's.

And now, my brethren, let us draw some positive teachings from the truth which we

have found in this verse, the truth of the possibility of a wider application of Christ's work on the part of Christians, than belonged to Christ Himself. First, we are apt as we read in our Bibles of Christ's miracles to stop and think: "Well, we have decreased in power since then. That was the age of miracles, which have now ceased. Ours is not so powerful as that early first age. We cannot do so much." Nay, but Christ says the opposite. "He that believeth shall do greater things than these." Oh, brethren, did you never think that Christ's miracles were really a sign of how much the world was against Him? God was in the world, and His real work was the world's spiritual redemption, to touch every heart and to turn it heavenward, and free it from sin, and give it life. But human hearts were not yet ready. So Christ shows the marks of His Divine power in external miracles and signs. He turns the water into wine, He feeds the multitude with bread in place of feeding souls with truth. But that was not the real end for which His Gospel came to earth; to do a few wonderful miracles, to calm the storm, or to feed the multitude. No, it was to save

human lives and hearts. Those early miracles were the signs of His power which He showed because the world disbelieved. But they were not the ends of His power. But now He has gone to the Father. His Spirit goes abroad, and hearts give way to it. Men love the Saviour, who has died for them, and turn to Him and Heaven and Truth. And now there is no need of miracles, for the great spiritual work is going on; and men are seeing the work. A heart, a community, turning to its God, is a greater work than a physical miracle. For a miracle is only the sign of a power that would work on your hearts, if you would let it. Spiritual obedience to God is that real work itself. You plant a seed, and before it appears above the surface you mark its spot by stakes to tell others where and what it is which they do not see. But when the plant or tree is growing itself in rich luxuriance, in its own place, then you need no stakes or signals. And so the need of physical miracles passed away, as the reign of the Spirit progressed, and the Christian tree grew in its place. The tree is a greater thing than the stake. You wish to win a child or scholar's love, and

show him yours; and in his instruction you begin with gifts, which he values for themselves. But when he has learnt your love, he prizes it more highly than gifts, and the need of gifts passes away. The conversion of a willing heart is a greater thing than a miracle, done before an unwilling, unbelieving world. For the latter is only a sign of power obstructed; but the former is the power doing its own full work. Oh, then, look at your own times and your own life with appreciating eyes. A man that believes is really doing a greater work than one of Christ's miracles which He did before the unbelieving Jews. A believing man and the work of belief is the real end of Christ's kingdom and power; not merely a sign that it does or might exist somewhere. Faith, Hope, Love, Purity; they are greater works than physical miracles. Oh, then, marvel and wonder, and be glad over the turning of a soul or of souls to God through Christ, as of old men wondered and rejoiced at the healings and miracles of Christ. Be glad that Christ has made these greater works possible in your time and in your life. Claim them for yourself, by becoming

one of those little ones who believe in Him; in whom the greater works of conversion and sanctification have been done.

But our text and its truth teaches us especially of the widening powers of Christian life. It is ever enlarging. Christ does not wish His followers to look backward and say, "Ah, the power, the purity of Christian exertion, is behind me. It was in the early years of the church. It was in Christ's time." No, He says, "The Christian Church and life spread out from me. He that believeth shall do greater works. I live but at the beginning of my church. I live and die in Judæa. But go ye into all the world. Ye shall do greater works than these." Christ arouses and encourages His disciples, by showing them that He looked forward to an increasing, progressive power, in His church and members, after his ascension. Christ was so divinely strong as to have no wish to claim that His work had reached its limit in His day. And so will you find, if you trace the history of the Christian centuries. At first, Christianity moved in the family, hallowing every simplest relation of life. This

was the work of the Primitive Church. Next, it extended its sway to the nation and the community, claiming to be heard in the assemblies of princes and in the halls of counselors. This was the work of the Church of the Empire and of the Middle Ages. Now, it has a still wider mission: to assert the common rights and fellowship of men; to rise from the family and the nation, to humanity itself; to stretch to all the world. This is the great work of the Church of the present. It could not be so at the first. It could not be so during Christ's life and ministry. It was reserved for the centuries of believers to go on to this, in the power of the Spirit, which their ascended Lord should and did send. And so the single mercies of Christ have grown into large, organized, world-reaching charities. The single figure of the Teacher, Christ, has spread into wide missionary bands. The fields have grown into churches. The one province, into all the world. The four Gospels, into multitudes of volumes of sanctified Christian learning and devotion. So do Christ's believers go on to greater works than their Master's earlier age.

Oh, if we could only believe this; if we could only realize the sublime glory of the part in Christian progress assigned us, here in this nineteenth century, and this far world! We should then not be occupied simply in studying the old liturgies, and the older churches, and in trying to copy them exactly, and in busying ourselves with restoring simply every unessential vestment, or habit, or custom, or service, however pure, which suited them, but which is not for us, or our age, or our work. We should not be afraid, I think, when we see Church and State separating; the Church leaving its old sphere of lesser works, for a new and freer sphere of greater works, in its ascended Master's power. Not on the family merely, not on the nation merely, but on humanity.

Oh, if we could realize this constantly widening field of the work of Christian faith. Then, there would be none of the discredit which we hear Christian people constantly casting upon Missions; and chiefly upon Foreign Missions. My brethren, it was just this Missionary prospect which the ascending Christ spread out before His desponding dis-

ciples to sustain their hope, and to excite their fervor. "I am confined to this province. I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But you, and those that believe in me and follow me, shall do greater things than these. They shall be witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth, because I go to the Father." Oh, brethren, who have done, or have given of your means in times past, to the spread of Christian faith, and live on its remembrance of that; or who shut yourselves up within the boundaries in which your more believing fathers placed the Gospel, and will not attempt to do greater works than they, as they did greater works than their predecessors, you are not looking at the Church's work as Christ its head did, as a work ever widening from Himself. You are not accepting the highest gift which the ascended Lord gives His believers always: the ability to do even greater works than His. It is as if the rising, growing, spreading tree should suddenly bethink itself, "I need do no more than the seed and its sprouts. They did a great work, by remaining in their own places. I need not try to increase from them."

And it loses the vision, and the possibility of becoming the full overshadowing tree.

Foreign Missions, yes, all missions, into new and greater fields, belong to him that believeth. They are the sign of strong faith in a man, or church, or age. He goes beyond Christ who follows Christ in faith. If you do not enlarge upon Christ's work, it is but a sign of weak or lacking faith.

And now, finally, *He that believeth* in Me shall do, not only the same things, but greater things than these. As you believe, you do. As you grow in faith, you grow in action. You perform greater things than these, as the result of having the true full active life of God in you. Christ always joins the internal and external together, as measures of each other. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "If ye *believe*, ye shall *do*."

There is faith enough of a certain kind now. It gathers men around a pulpit. It clothes the Bible with reverence in their eyes. Nay, it even leads them to acknowledge Christ. But remember, Christ did not make these the signs or measures of faith. But He only thought of a Faith which, by

resting on Him, was eager to do more than He, in spreading the kingdom. Faith is an activity, a power. It is not the full faith, if it stop in conviction or study alone. It does not grow, unless its field of activity grow. Faith is made up of a satisfaction and a dissatisfaction. Satisfied with what it believes, but dissatisfied ever with what it does. The more it is satisfied with Him in whom it believes, the more dissatisfied is it with the limits of its work. I must do greater works than these. Christ's works even are no limit to mine. And so it has St. James's old challenge, "Show me thy Faith without thy works, and I will show thee my Faith by my works."

COMFORT AND TRUTH.

A WHITSUNDAY SERMON.

"Another Comforter, ... Even the Spirit of Truth." — St. John xiv. 16, 17.

This is Christ's description of the Holy Ghost, whose nature and work come again before us this morning, with the annual return of Whitsunday, the festival of the Spirit. I think we must all have felt that in Christ's descriptions of the coming Spirit to his sorrowing disciples, there are two separate threads, or colors. He dwells often on what that Spirit will teach them: sin, righteousness, and judgment; the things of Christ, and things to come. He will guide them into all truth. At such times he calls him the Spirit of Truth. At other times, our Lord dwells on the joy, and strength, and comfort, which that Spirit will bring. "I will not

leave you comfortless; I will come unto you" by my Spirit. And in this connection the Lord calls him the Comforter, the Paraclete.

Here then are two very distinct traits and offices, which belong to the character of the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of Comfort and the Spirit of Truth. And our text unites them in one description, "The Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth." These two sides of the Spirit's office and character are represented by the symbol of the tongue of fire, which sat upon each apostle on the first Whitsunday. Fire has two great duties and powers, that of light and that of warmth. It has the duty and power of light, as the Spirit of Truth. And it has the duty and power of warmth, as the Spirit of Comfort. Truth is the light of life. Comfort is the warmth of life. And as fire includes both light and warmth, so the Spirit, which came as a tongue of fire, includes both Truth and Comfort.

Truth and Comfort — they are very distinct things in our life. They are the aims of very distinct kinds of men in our common experience. The life of Comfort and the life

of Truth often represent thoroughly diverse and even hostile interests. Truth scorns often, in its high atmosphere, the companionship of Comfort. Comfort, in its mantle of contented warmth, frequently cares not for the search for Truth. And yet, our text couples the two words and thoughts in close connection, and describes the very Spirit of Christianity as one to which both of these characteristics belong; as one which brings both Comfort and Truth; a tongue of fire, with both words of light and words of warmth to speak to men. I wish then, this morning, to consider what the combination of the two may teach us, with regard to the Spirit of God, and the religion whose mouthpiece and bringer He is.

In the first place, let us look into our own minds, and see what is the distinction which we really make between the two. What is the hostility that is really keeping apart these two great goods, Comfort and Truth, which would be such desirable companions if only their companionship were possible.

Now question yourselves, and ask your minds for definitions, and you will get answers like these: "Truth is a system of laws

and facts. It asks my intellect, not my heart. It is abstract; there is nothing personal about it." "But Comfort, consolation, is all personal. It comes with love to me, and receives love from me. It consults me, and my sorrow and my pleasure. It is not abstract, but concrete. Not impersonal, like Truth, but personal." There is all the difference between them that there is between the characters of a sage and a friend; between one so far lifted by lofty studies up above the world of common interests, that he cannot distinguish the forms of persons at all, and does not care to see them, and one who, by daily, active intercourse with friendly, practical, personal trouble and joy, is at home only when with his fellow-men, and who cannot lift his eyes above their heads. It is the difference of a study and a fireside.

And so it is, we must admit, in the spirit of human life. Shut a man up with his systems of truth, confine him to his search for truth, and he comes out strangely awkward, and unable to unbend, and to meet the practical lives of men, indisposed to care for their single, petty interests and grievances. Or,

send a man about among his fellows, adapt him to meet them in all points, and you indispose and weaken him for the pursuit of bare and abstract Truth. But another Spirit has entered the world on a Whitsunday, the Spirit of a higher life; the Spirit of Christ from God. It has no trouble of this kind. It brings all the truth which can keep students and sages busy forever, and all the comfort which can employ generations of philanthropists and friends to distribute and spread. Its Comfort and Truth are two hands of the same person, and are as one. How? Because its Truth is personal as well as its Comfort. This is its Truth. "There is none that doeth good." "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "I have overcome the world." "He hath overcome death, for it was not possible that He should be holden by it." "He has ascended into the heavens, there to make intercession for us."

There is no truth of Christ which is not warm and personal, and which, therefore, is not comfort also, none which does not include thoughts of Christ and of us. There is no truth of the Gospel which is abstract; none

which cannot descend like its Master and walk among men, among publicans and sinners; none which He cannot preface by those words of comfort, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." There is no truth of the Gospel which indisposes or incapacitates its giver or learner to go from the study to the home; nay, which does not help him to do so, with all the more ready and graceful confidence. For Christ has broken down the human distinction between Truth and Comfort. In the Gospel, Truth is all personal, giving warmth as well as light, speaking to heart as well as to reason. And so its Spirit is a Comforter as well as the Spirit of Truth. Its God is a friend as well as a counselor. And so has the Spirit which Christ promised and which descended upon Whitsunday, the Spirit of Christianity, ever been the minister both of man's profoundest knowledge and of his truest pleasures. It has both raised and softened human life. For it never utters one of its truths, but it is like a painter adding one more touch to the portraiture of a loving friend, which draws our affection. Every truth of the Gospel serves but to bring nearer

and make more distinct to us the figure of a personal Christ and Saviour. Take all the lines of truth out of the Bible, and you will find them combine to form the figure of Christ. It alone of all truth is personal, and so it alone can say in those words which our Communion Service will use this morning, when it repeats truth to you: "Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith to all who truly turn to him." Oh, be careful how you strike the figure of a personal Christ out of your religion; how you reduce it to mere morality or abstract doctrine; how in any way you weaken the personality of it.

Thus, then, the first great distinction and ground of separation between the ideas of Truth and Comfort is gone. But there is another barrier which is more apt to separate the two in the minds of most men, whether avowed or unavowed. We find our comfort, our pleasure, our ease, in the presence of those things or persons that are our like. Anything that rebukes us by its superiority is no source of comfort to us. And so the mass of men seek their peace, the comfort of their life, in other things than truth. Conscience

will constantly tell them that they are untrue, are false to their convictions, have constantly come short of their duty and of the impulses of their better nature. And in the presence of Truth they are ill at ease, they are out of place; there is no comfort; the Spirit of Truth is no Comforter. "They come not to the light because their deeds are evil." And must it not always be so? Must not imperfect and sinful humanity ever stand uncomfortably in the rebuking presence of Truth, although that Truth be embodied in a person? A confused, speechless guest at the rich supper, without a wedding garment? Can men ever boast that they find their consolation in Truth, when they never free themselves wholly from error and defect? Will it not always be that those things which do not remind us of our untrueness will be ever the most agreeable and comfortable to us? Shall we not like better to associate with men as untrue as ourselves, rather than with perfect and complete Truth and holiness, in God and Christ? How can the two be at one and the Spirit of Truth be a Comforter? This is the most fruitful source of irreligion, I be-

lieve. Not that men do not believe in Truth; they believe intensely in it, but they disbelieve silently and really in themselves, and think that they would not be able to bear the incoming of that bright light and strict rule of Truth!

And yet, the Spirit of the Truth of Christ says confidently to man, all untruthful as he is, "I am also the Comforter as well as the enlightener of men. I am glad warmth as well as bright light." How? Because it is the Spirit of the Truth of a Saviour, the Spirit of a truth which is not only able and satisfied to show you how untrue you may be, but is also able and eager to remove and correct that untrueness in you. The Truth of Christ is not one who says alone, "See by my side how out of Truth you are;" but "I, the Truth, have taken the place of the untrue, the just for the unjust, that I might bring you to God and make you true. My perfection is not only a shame to you, it is also a consolation to you, for by it I have redeemed you. I will substitute it for your imperfection. I will become the Lord your Righteousness, the propitiation for your sins."

Oh, brethren, this is the only form of Truth that I can imagine, which can claim any power of comfort or satisfaction to us; the truth of a Saviour, which, while it abates nothing of our error, takes that away from its disciple; which redeems while it rebukes; which teaches hope as well as humility; which, while it calls in the poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind, provides for them also wedding garments. So Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

Oh, humanity in its best moments of aspiration has longed to be at home in a truer life than its own falseness. It has looked wistfully, like the beggar outside of a warmly lighted, happy home of wealth, toward the kingdom of Truth, whose inmates are so suited to it as to find comfort in its truth and purity; till at last Christ has thrown open the door of the Father's many-mansioned Home before those wistful human eyes, and Truth has at last sent its invitation to Untruth: "You can be comfortable with me, for I have died for your untruth. I have taken away the condemnation. Pardon for

my sake, and for the sake of my Cross, will restore you to comfortable ease in the presence of Truth. Yes, you shall be received in the very presence of the God of Truth, and in his home of Truth."

It is of no consolatory value whatever to us to know that the Land of Light exists, for admission to which we are by nature unfitted. It is but a source of discomfort. It is only when that light adds to itself the warmth of Redemption, and makes provision for us to be admitted and assimilated to its truth, that Truth becomes hopeful and consolatory. Truth gains its redemptive element only in the Gospel. It is only Christ's Spirit of Truth which is also the Comforter. Brethren, may it come to us in both characters, on this day of Pentecost! Let none say, "I am too impure, too untrue in any form, to find ease or pleasure in so pure an atmosphere as God's presence. Its holiness would only shame me and sink me." "I should be an alien, a shadow in the light." No, but you might be there, in virtue not of your holiness, but of His holiness who has won your pardon; not an alien, but a son; in His right, not in your own. The

Spirit of Truth to-day shows you your sin indeed, yet comforts you with the additional verse, "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Enter in His name, and become daily more pure in that pure kingdom to which He has first opened you the door.

In some such way, then, the Gospel puts the bright words together, and its agent, the Spirit, becomes at once both light-giving and warmth-giving. This is the spiritual condition in which a man finds his comfort in truth. This is the great secret strength of a spiritual life; it is that it has reconciled Truth and Comfort; that it places its Comfort in Truth itself, and not in the seeming, outward forms of things, in the circumstances and the accessories of Truth. It is very difficult to live thus. We live so among the outward circumstances and forms and events of life, that we rest in them. Nay, even spiritual men and women come to consider that these forms and circumstances are the Truth, the necessary, essential things, and find their comfort in them. If families cluster around us, untouched by death, or loss, or accident; if property and position and honors and means

of good range themselves at our hands, we are quietly and calmly comfortable. We say and think we are comfortable in reliance upon Truth. No, not if when the child is taken, not if when the sickness falls, not if when the shipwreck, or the fire, or the financial convulsion suddenly meet us, we are suddenly all unsettled, and all hope is gone, all settled reliance on any centre disappears. Not if you say, Why has God treated me thus? Not if you cannot recognize that the Truth of God is something deeper than circumstances; that it may assume different and varying forms, which we call adversity and prosperity, and yet remain as true as ever.

The truth in which men are apt to take comfort is, "It is for my best good to have family, wealth, and health." That is the general creed; not "God is good, a Father who saves us and purifies us for Christ's sake." We construct truth out of the merely outward circumstances of truth, which may change. Just as if we stood in the shadow of a rock, and call it the rock, and finding the shadow move according to the position of the sun, should be bewildered and say, that

there is no firmness in the rock. Or, if we regather ourselves and our spirits revive, after such a shock, it is to go and rest and find comfort on some other new outward circumstance, sent as compensation for the lost one. So we are generally consoled by the sympathy of some human companionship, whose warm presence encourages us. We are comforted, not by Truth, but by sympathy alone, which in its turn may also leave us. And so we are like men upon the river, stepping from one sinking timber to another in the midst of rising, strong waves, utterly neglectful of the near rock which stands out at their side. We say, "Well, it has at least shown new and unexpected friends." Or, "The trouble has not been as bad as might have been, and I have other goods, other outward circumstances left, in which I will be comfortable." And we call this philosophically finding comfort. Nay, it is like guiding yourself by the phosphorescent gleam which shines now on this wave and then on the next, and not by the ever permanent beacon which is a fixed point.

Comfort in the Truth, is the only real phi-

losophy. It steadies itself on some underlying, fundamental, invisible truth, which is a wholly different thing from its visible machineries, and which changes not with their change of form and movement. Rely on no sympathy for comfort which does not remind you also of truth. For it and its comfort will have gone so soon as your sympathetic friend has shut your door and left you alone with the darkened, truthless life.

Comfort in the Truth — that alone is the secret of high and spiritual living. You cannot make a martyr or a hero out of anything else but the reconciliation of those two words and ideas. He is a martyr who says with the first martyr, "I am not alone, because the Father of Truth is with me." He is a hero whose soul and life are overflowing with joy and comfort, because he is working and suffering for the truth. The truth is ever nearer to him through the sacrifice, and so comfort is nearer to him. You cannot take the ground of that easy equipoise from him, for you cannot take his truth from him. And so has Christianity been and ever will be fertile in martyrs, public and private. For its Spirit

is both the Spirit of Truth and the Comforter, and only claims to be the latter, as and because it is the former.

Oh yes, the existence and permanence of real nobleness and heroism among us depends on how far we are led by the Spirit of Christ.

Men are nationally and individually finding their consolation and satisfaction in the nation's greatness and size and miles and men and money and machinery. It is comfort in mere circumstances again, and will make havoc of all heroism. No nation will struggle and die for those things. For why should it sacrifice its multitudes and men, and its health and money and prosperity, if they are all that it comforts itself in? It is only a man and people whose comfort is in the truth, which will strip itself of every outward thing, perhaps outward form and existence, for that one essential fundamental thing. Oh, just as long as God's Spirit is in the world, there will be some heroism. It will not die. It will always be the hope of men and nations that Christ has said, "I will send among you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth;" that there is a religion whose spirit is with us joining the two in one.

In the late years of the Apostolic era, St. John, who had lived under the influence of this double-powered Spirit of God, writes to his disciples and successors: "Try the spirits whether they be of God." How try them better than by this simple test of Whitsunday. Can the spirits which move our lives wear these two names together? Such a test touches many very common things. Is it the Spirit both of Comfort and Truth which takes pleasure and enjoyment in filling the public eye and prints with the popular records of human error and sin? Can this be the Spirit which rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth? Or again, is it the Spirit of God, that Spirit which only administers comfort through the truth, is it this Spirit that actuates us to accept any of the comfort of life which comes from an untrue business practice, or from a dishonest and wrong occupation? Or is it this great double Spirit of God that is moving a man who chooses to retain the ease of life by being false to his truest, noblest, impulses of love and benevolence, by assigning false pleas and excuses for not giving and helping? Or can it be

any impulse of the Spirit which comforts through the Truth, that will allow one of us to find his or her highest satisfaction and comfort and consolation in a life of false and affected social etiquette? Can it be the Spirit of Comfort and of Truth which actuates men so often to be satisfied in society, not when they have exposed ignorance and learned truth, but when they have covered ignorance and gained reputation.

These instances are all signs of unspiritualness of condition; signs that we are not under the influence of that Spirit of the Gospel which alone has joined the hands of these two bright ones, and bade them together breathe their light and warmth upon human life. Do not think that your Christianity, if it admits any of these things, can have the Spirit which Christ sent. Trouble and untruth, discomfort and error, they came hand and hand into the same human life. Together they have spread chill and darkness at once upon men. Oh, let us to-day rejoice to welcome the different visitors which enter through Christ's gift of the Spirit in their place. "I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Com-

forter, even the Spirit of Truth." The Gospel alone could contain such a promise; the Gospel whose truth is warm and personal and comfortable; the Gospel which tells how untrue man can be at ease with God and His righteousness. May you be disciples of Christ, and so win the promise which He made to His first disciples. May we all win the possession of that great Spirit, with its twofold gift, which is waiting to fall upon us as upon the little company of the Apostolic Whitsunday.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS.

"And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" — ST. LUKE vii. 31–34.

THIS is one of the most interesting of our Lord's comparisons. It is not taken from nature. It is not taken from history. It is not taken from the prominent habits or businesses of adult life, nor from anything which is conspicuous or important in the world. But it shows us how our Lord had watched the lesser things of daily life, even the sports of the children as they clustered in the large squares of the Jewish towns and in the midst of the

graver crowds and businesses of their elders, and loved to run in and out, and made their little knots for games and mimicry and happiness, their irresponsibility mingling with the responsibility of their elders, their light merry voices joining the grave, earnest tones of men and women bent on gaining their livelihood; their imitation of life going on in the very midst of the reality of life; the light, easy, quick forms of players among the heavier, slower, more serious knots of workers; the mimicry of childhood by the side of the realities and duties of manhood. So Christ had passed through the busy market-place, and had noticed the quick laughs and cries of the children as well as the serious talk of men. He had marked how children love to play where more responsible things are going on, where work is being done. Nay, it is even possible that He may Himself have been a child in the market-place of Nazareth, mingling with the sports of childish companions, as well as interested in the grave employment of men and women who knew him so well, and who only thought, as they looked at him, "Is not this the son of Joseph?" However learnt,

here is a bit of the light, irresponsible, sportive side of daily life which has caught the Lord's notice, has painted its picture on his memory, and now comes to light with its comparison to point His teaching as He stands discussing with Pharisees and Priests. "What are people of this sort like?" He suddenly exclaims. "What can I compare them to but to the children as they play in your marketplaces, counterfeiting your real life, making a mock marriage or a mock funeral, and some of them complaining if their companions will not join their sports, saying, 'We pipe, and you will not dance at the festivity; or we play that we mourn, and you will not come and weep at the sorrow or tragedy which we are playing.'" That is the vivid little picture that Christ calls to their minds, a picture they could not help remembering and acknowledging, a picture which is just as fresh and true to us to-day as it was to them. For children's natural sports and children's lives are the same in one century as another, in one land as another, notwithstanding improvements in toys, differences of civilization, or advances in knowledge. I take it therefore that the same

picture and the same application of the picture can serve us to-day as Christ applied it then. He is talking of that same subject which has occupied our services this morning, the life of John the Baptist and the comparison of John's duty and mission with His own: "We are two very different men, as different as we can be, as different as the two reverse sides of life, the grave and the joyful, the stern and the happy. John came unsocial, ascetic, rigorous, and grave, neither eating nor drinking, engaging in no common united life; and I have come the very reverse, serene, calm, peaceful, joyful, eating and drinking and engaging in every common act of life, indulging every sympathy of life, even of publicans and sinners. His field and audience-room was the desert; mine is your cities, your streets, your roads, and your houses. And yet how do you receive us who come so very differently? Why, you are like the children playing in the market-place and complaining that others will not join their sports, saying, 'We sing, and you will not come and dance as we act our joys; we mourn, and you will not weep as we act our sorrow.' You complain of John

that he is the severe man, that he does not fall into your joys, that this sort of life and teaching is a frown upon joyfulness, that he makes you too serious, too long-faced, puts too severe a strain upon your hearts; that his life is too restricted. You pipe, and he does not respond. And equally you complain of me that I am strangely lax and over-sympathetic, continuously serene and joyful, free, easy, and at peace everywhere and at every time, even in your times and places when you mourn. My life seems too unrestricted. You have mourned, and you say I have not wept. You use the same words as the children in the market-place." Such is the comparison. Such is the view of themselves which He wishes to give the people of His day. I want to ask you this morning to see how much of it we can apply to ourselves, how much clearer a view of ourselves we can get by the use of this same comparison of our Lord's.

Now, in the first place, there is a sad, stern side of religion, and also a joyful happy side to it. There is a preliminary stage in religion for our life when John the Baptist is its preacher

and representative and leader; and another fuller, richer, eternal stage in religion when Christ the Lord is the teacher, the representative, and the leader. John's sadder sort of religion prepares the way for Christ's happier sort of religion. One is the messenger to make the path for the other, and neither of them does the world understand or agree with. John the Baptist is irresponsive to the world's joy, Christ irresponsive to the world's sorrow.

Let me try to describe them both: first, John the Baptist's stage of religion as being irresponsive to the world's joy: It is the very first kind of religious thought that comes to a man's life, and it comes as John came to treat the Jewish people in his sternness and warning and severity. I think that religion comes with its first tremendous grave words to a man with precisely the sobering effect and atmosphere that John carried with him, the preacher in the wilderness. Think of what he said and how he addressed the multitude that felt drawn to visit and hear him: "Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our

father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." There is the first hard, stern thought that came to them, that they must stand each man alone before God. Their descent from Abraham was nothing to them before Him. They must consider that every man is to stand in his solitary, naked self before God. "Religion is a matter between you and your God," cries this lonely, solitary, friendless man enforcing what he says by his own life and figure. It was a stern repulsive thought to those Jews that they must stand alone, without relying upon Abraham. And so when the first serious, religious thought comes to a man and draws him to one side, out of the social and family comities of life, saying, "There is a question between you and God," there is an attraction about it just as about John. The man says, "I must think of it." But yet it is very sad and stern, that giving up of human connections and standing alone in the Divine presence. The warm human heart feels the coldness and hardness of it. The sense of loneliness strikes a chill through the nature. It has none of the world's social joy in it. It is the John

Baptist stage in religion, when the world pipes and sings, but religion is stern and will not respond, and the world says, "Oh, it is too harsh and severe to be thus sternly placed alone with God."

And this stern John had still another hard, vigorous thought which contradicted the world's joy. He made men feel not only a sense of human loneliness and singleness, but as they stood thus without help from Abraham or any other human life he made them look at themselves, and as he cried, "Repent! O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" there was added to the sense of loneliness the sense of sin and shame. One might be willing to stand alone if he were confident and proud of himself, if he could feel that he could draw men's eyes to himself without being ashamed. But when this stern John pitilessly made every man — citizen, soldier, publican, and Pharisee — feel, see his sin and shame and guilt and danger, then it was utterly uncomfortable. They were irresistibly drawn to that stern man in the wilderness; they could not help it; but all that they met there was terribly repulsive

to the world's wish for comfortable happiness in society and self-satisfaction. And it is precisely so forever. There is a John the Baptist stage at the beginning of religion when shame for sin and its guilt is added to one's sense of singleness and responsibility, and, though we know it is true, yet it chills all our social and self-satisfied joy. The world pipes, "Oh, forget sin; do not search it out; it is very uncomfortable to be so morbid, and to see how dishonest, false, hateful, and sensual you have been; others are so too; come and be merry." But John will not reply or respond. He says: "You are to answer for yourself, and you have much sin to repent of," and he says it without abating any of the sternness of his words, the world meanwhile in little clusters in the market-place piping and complaining that others will not sing and dance to its music, that men will be severe and think of self and sins.

But John the Baptist seems to them hard in yet another way. He not only makes men stand alone and see their sins, but he gives them work, the hardest of work to do to change it all. "Bring forth fruits worthy of

repentance; you that have more clothing must go and share; you that have power, be not exacting; you that have been cruel, do no violence." A whole hard life of reform he preaches. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire." The sense of labor to be done, — daily, continual, humble, severe, minute, — that is the third harsh requirement of John the Baptist; and it grates on the world's ear. It does not agree with its sort of joy. John seems to be very harsh when they want to pipe, sing, and dance, and be very easy and happy. And it is so still. It is your duty to work for a better life, to "bring forth fruits," to be "a good tree;" that is another of the first religious thoughts that come to a man. You are to stand alone with God; you are to feel your faultiness; you are to become a good, fruitful life, are the thoughts which the first stage of awakened conviction sternly brings to a man's attention. You are alone, you are sinful, you must labor, are the three preliminary convictions of religion, and they are sharp, short, and strict; and all the worldly singing and piping finds no response from

them. They seem to have no music in them, those hard, metallic convictions. They are dull and hard. They do not sing musically like cymbals. You would as soon think of the Baptist singing and piping in your pleasant, feasting palace. When these stern convictions enter a man's life, they draw him out of the world's festivity for a while; it pipes, but he cannot hear; he is standing with God, full of shame, thinking how he shall become more fruitful; and men say, "He has a devil, he is mad, to think of these things in the pleasant world." Ah, how many Christians have there been who have thus wounded the world's pride by being deaf to its pipe and song!" How many have seen that life is a sterner thing than just a song, have felt that they cannot go to the brilliant dancing room or the gay, glittering, social hall; cannot go to shine in any merely selfish gathering, because a conviction possesses them, because they are for the moment breathing a purer, higher atmosphere than the selfish air on which the piper's sound reaches them; because either they feel that they stand in God's presence, or feel their weak selfishness and would not add to it, or

feel that they had some duty to do, duty to rescue the needy and wandering on every side of them, in every house, duty of love and justice toward every man. Meanwhile the world sings and the man in these religious convictions struggles. Oh, my friends! have you never had such a moment? a moment when you felt that it was better to be alone with God, yourself, and your duty, rather than rush like a boy after the music you hear in the world's streets? or is your heart always trying to dance to the selfish world-music? Have you no power to get into John the Baptist's wilderness of conviction and thought, because your generation calls out to you with its taunt, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced?" It is very sad for you if you have to say, "No, I have no such power. I never had such a moment."

But now I must turn to the other side of religion, that which is represented by Christ rather than John the Baptist — the full, rich, joyful, complete religious life for which John's life of conviction is the preparatory step. John prepares the way for it. Through the sense of single responsibility before God, through

the sense of sin, through the sense of work to be done, a man comes out into the pure happiness of Christ's discipleship: John's disciples become Christ's, John's baptism gives way to Christ's. John must decrease, while Christ's fuller, happier religion every day increases. Let me try to describe how. A man goes through that first stage of religious life standing alone before God in his own individual responsibility, but while he stands there — hark! Christ comes to him and says, "I will stand with you, your friend, your Saviour before God, your advocate, redeemer:" and the first preparatory, sad sense of loneliness becomes a happy sense of companionship, and a new life of communion begins with God, with Christ, with all who love the Lord, with all that is good and noble everywhere. And now he has a joy at which the world wonders just as much as it did at his solemnity before. Now the world mourns, and he does not weep. Now the other side of Christ's comparison is illustrated. The world brings adversity to him, loss, bereavement, suffering, mourning, and he does not bemoan, is still buoyant, is still full of spirit, does not give his life up to

weeping. The world's sorrow touches his joy and his companionship just as little as before the world's joy affected or drew him from his solemnity and sad loneliness. And so his generation looks and wonders and complains again, "We have mourned unto you, and you have not wept; we cry over this and that as calamities, and you are unmoved in it all, as happy as ever; nothing disturbs you; we have our sad moments, and you are equable in all moments, in all society, even in the society of publicans and sinners." This is the joy that the world cannot take from the Lord's disciples, the joy that cannot respond to despondency or mourning, the joy of Christ's eternal companionship.

But see in another particular how Christ brings a happiness to him which mourning does not affect. John's sad stage in religion teaches men a sense of sin. But Christ follows John and stands by the ashamed, repentant, saddened man and says, "I forgive; go in peace, sin no more; thy sins are forgiven thee;" and now, instead of a man who would not dance to the world's joy, there is a man who will not weep when selfishness and world-

liness are mourning, even when they come to him with the darkest story of vice and crime, with the blackest view of human nature, with the most despondent outlook for society; he does not join, he does not weep to their mourning, he does not lose his great, joyful sense of a Forgiver, of a Purifier, of a greater Power than Evil. A happy, full Christ-life he lives even among publicans and sinners; and the world looks on and says, "Behold an easy, careless man, a friend and encourager of evil; we mourn, and he does not weep." Nay, he sees the evil, and feels it; but he sees and feels a greater power, a Christ's love and forgiveness, and therefore he will not give way or give up when the men of his generation grow weak and frightened.

Now look at the happy side of religion in one more aspect, that side of religion which does not weep when men cry "How hard life is!" The hard command to work and reform belonged to the earlier, sterner stage of religious life which John represents. The man says, "I must be better," and it seems a long hard labor. But Christ follows John and says. "I will help you; do it from love of me; do it

in the power of my spirit; do it by my side; do it in the steps of my example." And then the work of sanctification is a happiness, the struggle with weakness a joy, the slow continual labor of reformation a delightful development; and a man appears who is happy in labor. The world of his generation mourns to him, "Oh, this hard struggling life, labor to-day and labor to-morrow till you drop into the grave!" But he does not respond to any such melancholy. He will not weep with the world. "Work and labor, aye! to-day and to-morrow it goes on perfecting me with my Lord's help, not till I drop into the grave, but till I am received by the Master beyond the grave with the final commendation, and the complete crown of righteousness set about with all its jeweled virtues, pure, well-ordered brilliants." Can you overcome the joy of such a man with your selfish lamentations when he sees in drudgery and activity, in defamation and evil, opportunities for completer sanctification? You mourn, and he laughs; you despond, and he is cheerful; you lament your lot and his, and he has a bright side for it. He simply cannot, will not weep when you

mourn. The cloud may as well try to stop the sun's shining. It will always shine; it is all light and nothing from without can darken it. Remember, if you are despondent ever, it is yourself, it is because of yourself; it is not in reality because of events or circumstances. Christ offers a joy which will not weep when the world around mourns, and which all circumstances cannot darken. It is as easy to fall into the world's mourning as it is to go after the world's music. It is the great victory when, in the triumph of Christian confidence, you can laugh above all misgivings, you can lift up your head, although disaster seems to be in every event and foreboding in every face, superior to the world's mourning as to the world's singing.

I have talked of two sides of religion, the stern and the joyful, the side of John the Baptist and the side of Christ. Both of them are true religion; but John's is the preparatory stage for Christ's fuller, happier state. Wisdom is justified of all her children. It seems to me so universally true, this picture of John preparing for Christ, the hard making us ready for the joyful. I remember one great day in

the Alps a few months ago, in which for hours and hours I climbed over the roughest of pathways — indeed you must find your own pathway — till every new step seemed a wrench, till everything seemed to discourage progress; rocks in the worst form of barrier; soft, treacherous earth when you needed a firm footing; bleak, inclosed, uninteresting views. The whole human frame seemed to protest in every part. There was no pleasure in those hours of ascent. And yet the hours had their final moment; they brought you out and up at last to the great inspiration of the Bernese Alps, the brightest Alpine company of sovereign mountains. The last step opened to you a panorama of snowy and brilliant glory at which you could only look and exclaim for joy. And as the eye ranged the mighty glaciers and lofty, pure snow-cliffs with the ever-moving, wreathing robe of cloud throwing its light shade on every point in rapid succession, as the ear listened to the crash of each moment's avalanche of ice, as the whole heart beat higher in the presence and face of such a spectacle, do you suppose the climb seemed hard? Did not every limb's tortures contribute to the

joy as it rested in the pure upper air and could say, "I brought you hither; my very throbs are now throbs of joy?" There are no doubt better illustrations, but this one has come to me for use to-day; and so I say, Thus we have our preparation for Christ's joy. Religion is stern that it may be joyful; you must stand alone with God, that you may seek Christ's companionship. You must learn your sin with shame, that you may hear Christ's forgiveness with eager happiness. You must feel how much you have to do, that you may be ready to take Christ's offered help with joyfulness. Be not ashamed or downcast when religion seems stern to you and draws you from the pipe and song of life. It is true religion. It is John Baptist preparing you for Christ, making you ready to welcome Him who brings eternal joy, and will exalt you above the mourning and calamity of life.

PERSONAL CONVICTION AND POPULAR CLAMOR.

"And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified: and the voices of them, and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required." — ST. LUKE xxiii. 23, 24.

YOU all know from what sad story these verses are taken. It is the crisis in the earthly fate of Jesus our Lord. It is the last effort against Him, which forces Pilate, against his conviction, to give sentence that the Crucifixion should take place. And it is the victory of mere noise, this sad eventful decision, by which Christ dies. It is gained by the number and loudness of the Jewish voices. It is not argument that wins the case. There is no conviction that wrings the sentence from Pilate, by its moral strength. It is simply the overwhelming cry of loud human voices, requiring that He might be crucified. Pilate

cannot withstand the tumult of numbers, and their fierce demanding cries. "And the voices of them, and of the chief priests prevailed." The majority rule by the very numerousness and loudness of their voices; entirely and wholly, because they overwhelm and outvote the one man who opposes them. It is a conquest by sheer force of numbers.

Now this Jewish scene, so important in the world's life, introduces us to a very serious subject; a subject which is too apt to be given up to politicians, but which yet belongs to morals and religion, and involves moral and religious questions. I mean the rule or prevalence of the majority; the ascendency of those who have the greatest number of throats at their command. When is it right, and when is it wrong? When just and wise? When unjust and destructive? We live in the age of the government of majorities. It has replaced the old personal arbitrary rule of one man, or of a small aristocracy. The theory, that every man has a voice and vote in the arrangement of things, and, that that arrangement shall be according to the opinion which combines the greatest number of those

votes or voices, is almost universal. Even where the old figure of an hereditary monarch is retained, it is more for the sake of historic continuity than anything else. Behind him, the majority, the larger opinion of the most voters prevails, and gives complexion to the government. Now, we feel that this is all true and right, this free expression of human voices. We would not return from it. It seems to embody the only principle upon which a decision has any justice, or is binding at all. It appeals to our love of freedom, and sense of equity, that the multitude should have free expression, and that after that free expression, the opinion which is supported by most voices should be the leading and prevalent one. It encourages activity, free thought, and discussion, and the individual personal interests of all. And yet we are sorely perplexed about it at times. This fair, free theory often seems very wrong in its application. Often, a man of strong convictions, and firm personal character, will not submit like Pilate to do exactly as the voices require, and he finds it necessary to take a stand against them. This is the heroism of our modern days.

Not, as of old, to face the one tyrant monarch, or leader, or oppressor, but one man to face the many. We feel very keenly at times, that, from the Crucifixion of Christ down to the present week of our own lives, the voices of the majority often mean nothing at all, and should have no weight; that is, they are mere empty noise, behind which there is no truth, but only ignorance, or only a half truth, destructive in its mutilated state. Every true man, who believes in this free expression of human voices, comes face to face, many a time, with the fact, that there are occasions when he must disregard it; when the number of voices must not prevail with him, if he is to keep his truth and his self-respect. It worries and startles us. We cling to our theory of free human expression, and yet we shrink from many of its applications. It is a problem; a perilous place with its rock on either side of us. The free voice of the many should rule; but yet, that voice has often no authority of truth for me, we say, each of us oftentimes.

Now it seems to me, that this practical difficulty comes from our not distinguishing

between the cases in which the voice of the many should prevail, and the cases in which it should not prevail. For there is a clear distinguishing line to be drawn. There are some occasions, or classes of occasions, in which you cannot reach truth except by asking and heeding the voices of the many. And there are other sorts of occasions, when those many voices only drown, or confuse, or obstruct truth.

Let us try to divide them by the help of the text which I have this morning chosen. And you will excuse me, if I speak plainly, and without much rhetoric, on so practical a subject as this.

First, when ought the many voices to prevail? In two sorts of circumstances, I think. And the first of them is this. Whenever the responsibility of decision and action is to belong to the many whose voices are heard. If a company of travelers are to choose between certain plans, or paths of journeying, and no one person has or is to have the responsibility, and the success or disappointment will not be visited upon any one member, but all are interested and will bear the blame or praise of

the future action; then a vote of the entire companionship is taken. It is not because they know anything of the comparative merits of the paths or plans, or because a majority will know more of those merits than the minority, or than any single member; it is only because no one man will bear the responsibility; all are equally concerned as a company. It is a recognition of the fact that the responsibility is common, and that the decision is common. The voice of the many is taken, and must prevail, not because of its wisdom or its freedom from prejudice, but because it is their matter in concert, and only justly and satisfactorily by a majority can the decision be reached, and its responsibility be allotted. Their decision may be wrong in itself, but it is right that it should have been so made. Now this seems very simple and true at first, and yet we overlook it constantly. We often attribute the error of our decisions in church and state to letting many voices speak. And we say, "It is a wrong principle evidently, because error has come from its application." No, the error is human, on account of human weak-sightedness. There would have resulted

a worse error if, when the action and its responsibility rested with all the company or nation, the voice of all had not been taken. It would have been a separation of the things which must always go together, if human life is to be worth anything at all to us, and is to have any truth or growth in it; namely life and the responsibility of life. No matter what errors the company may make; if the responsible results of the decision are to be theirs, the decision must be theirs also. It must not be taken or made by any one man over them, or for them, although he may be wiser than the many. They might not then make so many little errors, but they would never grow in responsible action and intelligence; which would be the great error.

Let us take this then as plain. If the responsibility belongs to all in unison, the voices of the many, wise or ignorant, prejudiced or unprejudiced, must all be taken, and must prevail.

But in the case of our text, we feel that it was not so. Pilate was not a merely parliamentary presiding officer of that Jewish company, calling for their votes on a decision for

which they were responsible, and a sentence which they were to give. It was not as when Moses, or Joshua, or Samuel, or Elijah cried to the same Jewish people saying, "Choose you this day which ye will serve, right or wrong, God or idols." Then the voice of the majority must prevail, for it was their moral, responsible choice, resting upon themselves. But with Pilate it was very different. Christ was brought to his judgment seat alone. He alone was to give sentence and decision. The multitude had nothing to do with the judging or deciding. They had said, when he asked them to take Jesus and judge Him according to their law, "No, it is not lawful for us to put any man to death. We cannot act or decide at all. The responsibility is yours and yours alone." They threw it back wholly upon him. And he could not evade it. He could not get rid of it by washing his hands before the multitude. It was an individual matter between him and Christ. He was to give sentence; and he did give sentence, and the multitude had no right to have their voice heard at all. The thing should have been decided in the deep quiet of the judgment

hall, with no one present. Every time that he led Christ out before that pushing, crazy multitude, he made a profound mistake. Every time he listened to those loud voices, requiring that his prisoner might be crucified, it was fatal to justice. He had no need to ask them, "What shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ!" If the responsibility had been theirs, their voices should have prevailed. But if not, then their voices should have been counted no more to him than the roar of the many-tongued winds; and he should have gone where their sound could not have penetrated. Here then is the first great distinction to help us in this difficult matter. I do not mean to make the political or social applications of it this morning, — that a man must not become the creature of a party, and give up responsibility, — but I want to suggest the moral and religious thoughts which this subject includes. I want you to remember that the voice of the many has nothing to do with any sentence or decision which, morally and religiously, you are responsible for. I want you to remember that individual responsibility is a great religious fact. I desire to impress

upon your minds that we each stand as Pilate stood, to give decision with regard to Christ. We are each alone with Him. No man can give sentence in the matter but ourself. The responsibility rests upon us personally. No man can decide between us and Christ. God has put Him before our judgment, and He stands as of old in the Roman judgment chamber, saying with Divine majesty, "I am a King;" and, "Thou hast no power at all, except it were given thee from above." And yet quietly awaiting our decision, humbly crowned with thorns. And every quiet moment of conviction when we stand face to face with Christ and His pure Cross-marked religion, and debate anxiously the question, "Shall I decide for or against Him?" is a reproduction of the interviews of Pilate and Jesus at the inner judgment seat. And, my friends, I believe it is with us as with him. We should decide in a moment for Jesus, if it were not that other voices enter in. We carry the debate out to the noisy, voiceful multitude around us, who have no responsibility of decision in it, and whose voices, therefore, have no right to be heard. "The fear of the

multitude is on every side," as David says. "The voices of them, and of the chief priests prevail," in St. Luke's words. The many voices overwhelm the one voice of a man's own heart. And we are wont to say, like true Americans, in our religion, "If I see so many against religion, if I hear so many voices against it, shall I follow my one voice? Shall not the majority rule? And so the many, who are are not church-goers, come in, and their voices control our decision for the Church. The many-tongued voice of unbelief overwhelms us, and we give sentence as it desires against Christ. The many voices of selfishness rule our decision with regard to the religion of the cross of self-denial. It is not so much what they say, as the number that say it. Everybody sees and hears the multitude outside as he debates about acknowledgment of Christ, and duty to Christ. In our fear of them, we bring Him out to the multitude, and say, "What shall I do with Him?" And they are instant with loud voices, urging his crucifixion. They control the sentence, and we bear the responsibility and results of it. Oh, think of it I pray you. That empty-tongued

crowd of fashion or society, which cries down your single heart's voice, will not bear the responsibility of your rejection of Christ. That hard-voiced throng of money-seekers, which shames and silences your warm conviction for the Lord, will not bear the guilt in your place at all. That false smooth-toned multitude of unbelievers, which surround you and ply you with their infidel voices and sneers and arguments, and chill your spiritual aspirations, they do not give the sentence, and are not responsible. You can never fasten the blame upon them. They will only mock at you when the results come. They will say, "It is none of my matter." And it will be true. Oh, my friends, would that I could emancipate the voice of every man's self, and make him hear that alone! Would that I could make each of us feel that, on the very principle of just representation, he only should be heard who is to make and bear the decision, and that is only our one self; each in his own case. I believe the cause of Christ would be won in many and many a life, here and everywhere, if this were recognized, and each man's voice heard alone. Oh, do not ever bring Christ

out to the multitude. Do not ever turn from His dear person and say, "Yes, but how many there are against Him!" Keep your own heart's voice clear and distinct. Let it be heard against the world of voices, if need be, in its own decisions. Do this; do not let any one else influence you in matters of your individual responsibility if you would be a real man, nay more and better yet, if you would be a Christian, a Christ-man.

And now, there is a second distinction to be made in this matter of the voice of the majority. There is another distinction, giving another class of cases in which the many voices should prevail, and another class of cases in which they should not prevail. They should always prevail, in a matter of fact, in the testimony of experience. The more witnesses to a fact of experience that can be brought, the better for the truth, whoever has to decide it.

The wider experience, the more experiences upon which a decision is based, the truer it is; truer for more people, and for more places and for more years. So a popular general election is a very true and solemn thing. It

is the gathering in of the voices of many witnesses, the voices of many lives; each testifying how an individual experience under certain circumstances, and in certain places, has been and will be affected by certain measures; each speaking freely the want or the wish which is a fact in that experience. And the larger number of such voices which unite in agreement furnish the basis for the wisest, most lasting measures, which will embrace the widest ground, and stand the longest and hardest strain, and be the nearest to the reality. Then there is an authority in the majority, in the overwhelming voice of the many. And it is right that they should prevail. No one man can decide from the material of his own life. The measures must be tested by the experiences of the various lives, whose circumstances and places vary. So in all matters of fact which come within experience; the larger the number of experiences which can express themselves in unison, the surer are we, and the truer are our decisions; whether it be in history, in science, in travels, or in daily life. Anything that speaks from experience has by it an authority. And the voices of many in

matters of experience, should prevail. Even when you are to make a responsible decision of your own, if it be on matters of personal human experience, the more voices should prevail with you. Bring the many witnesses and be you the judge. But your sentence only gets its authority from their overbalancing voices of truth. For one man to stand against the many, and insist on a decision against the witnesses of the multitude's life, is mere obstinate conceit, and ends in a quick failure and deep trouble. The voice or voices of experience must and should prevail.

But now turn to this story of Pilate again. What sort of voices did he listen to so carefully and allow to prevail? Did they bring the overwhelming weight of experience against him? Was that what controlled and turned his decision? No, he knew that those chief priests cried for crucifixion out of envy. He knew that the Jewish crowd had shouted "Hosanna," to Jesus, two short days before. He knew that they did not any of them understand Christ. He kept asking, "Why, what evil hath He done?" "Only give me some testimony on which to base a decision

against Him!" He felt that behind the passion of those mouths which clamored for crucifixion, there was no knowledge of Christ's character at all. He knew that his own experience of Christ, that his comprehension and appreciation of Him, was something of which this crowd of men and priests had nothing. He who felt the influence of Christ's truth, had that on which to base his sentence which the multitude could not give him. He alone had the voice of real experience of Christ in him. He knew that against that one inner voice of his own experience, the voice of the passionate throng had no real weight or authority. They should never have prevailed.

I pass by again the political and social applications of this; and I take the moral and religious ones which are all-important. I want to insist on the value of the voice of a man's own experience of Christ, the voice of the Spirit within him, not the voice of his personal self claiming its responsibility of which I last spoke, but the voice of the Spirit bearing witness to the Truth; which no number of men who do not know Christ ought to be

able to overwhelm or cry down. If you have felt the truth of Christ's love to you only for a moment; if you have felt His purity by the side of your sin in one quick instant of repentant experience; if you have once felt His gentle yet complete kingliness by the side of false earthly power; there is a voice of experience within you over which all voices of men who have seen and learnt no such facts should never prevail. The voice of the Spirit of Truth; oh, how it has spoken against the multitudes at martyr fires; in quiet homes, in the places of concourse, like wisdom crying in the gates; in many a long discussion and persecution, in many an hour of neglect or scorn! How often has it arrayed one man against the world! How many a man has felt heroic, as the Spirit of a Divine experience used him for a mouthpiece, and through him has pronounced part of that word of God which endureth for ever! But is there a sadder, lower man than he, who, with a fact of God, however small, speaking to him, believes it and yet lets the empty, worldly tones of passion and ignorance drown it and hush it, and cause him to

give sentence for the crucifixion against his very experience?

Oh, I urged you a few moments ago to preserve the voice of your individual moral responsibility. I urge you now to keep that greater voice clear and distinct; the voice of God's Spirit against the noisy irreligiousness which has no knowledge of Christ behind it at all. Be glad to be able to say, "I know Him," as Christ Himself says of His close relation to the Father, "I know Him; and if I should say, I know Him not, I should be a liar like unto you who deny the Spirit." Oh, do not belie your own knowledge, the very voice of your own experience. Rely on the Spirit's voice if you would not have it desert you finally.

These are the two things to be guarded, your sense of moral responsibility and your sense of truth. The many voices must never prevail against them. If these loud, many voices have the decision to give, or if they speak real experience of truth, let their majority be taken. But when yours is the pronouncing of the sentence, and yours is the fact of truth, however small, resist the loud

force of the multitude. Oh, if a man's moral self and God's Spirit insist upon being heard together, and above all else, it is not obstinacy but firmness of purpose; it is the strongest condition of man; it is the richest of life's harmonies, man's voice and God's voice at one. It is louder and stronger than all the loud strength of human throats. Yes, and it too shall at last become the voice of the many; when the multitude shall be upon the side of Truth; when a multitude which no man can number shall together cry, not for the crucifixion of the sufferer, but shall sing the praise of the Lamb who was slain and is now upon the throne.

And now unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.